



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

March 25, 2021

HB 247: Election Law - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is a statewide public policy organization that promotes the full inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of community life by eliminating barriers, creating opportunities, empowering people, and promoting innovation. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. From that perspective, **the DD Council supports HB 247.**

WHY is this legislation important?

- Voting is a fundamental right that Maryland's citizens with developmental disabilities want and need to participate in.
- All of Maryland's voters must be able to access their fundamental right to vote simply.
- There can be many barriers to voting for a person with a disability, providing priority in a voting line lowers one of those barriers.
- Helps ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Help America Vote Act.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Those with mobility issues and those supporting people with mobility issues, those with a young child, or with a child with disabilities to may request or be granted priority in voting lines, the use of ballot marking machines, and ballot scanning.
- Requires the State Board of Elections to create regulations to ensure that Election Judges are appropriately trained.
- Ensures notices are provided to alert eligible voters that they may seek priority status. Additionally, this initiative calls for the collection of data to determine the effectiveness of the priority system and level of participation.

HB 247 is another step in the right direction towards informing and empowering all of the voters of Maryland, including those with developmental disabilities.

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