



BILL: SB0596

BILL TITLE: Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Hours of Operation

BILL SPONSOR: Senator Washington

POSITION: FAVORABLE

COMMITTEE: EHEA

HEARING DATE: 2.18.2021

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0596

Universal access to the ballot box is an essential component of a functioning democracy, and thus a priority for our grassroots group Represent Maryland. We also believe that “all politics are local”, and this means elections during non-presidential years are just as vital as presidential elections. Unfortunately, state law does not currently reflect this principle, as voting hours of operation at early voting centers currently differ between presidential (8 am-8 pm) and non-presidential (10 am-8 pm) years.

SB0596 rectifies this discrepancy by making early voting hours uniform across elections. Moreover, it expands voting hours by two hours, making these often lesser publicized elections more accessible to people who have to work longer hours or multiple jobs and may otherwise be unable to exercise their right to vote.

Represent Maryland believes that REAL democracy is only possible when working people have significant input, thus we strongly support legislation that 1) expands access to the franchise and 2) potentially increases turnout in local elections. We believe that SB0596 meets these criteria, and thus, ask that you find this bill favorable.

Sincerely,
Cristi Demnowicz, Chair
Represent Maryland
Maryland Voter-LD7

Represent Maryland is a grassroots anti-corruption group of citizen advocates that #FightForDemocracy in Maryland. Our democracy solutions include: Public Election Funds, Independent Redistricting, Special Elections, Ranked Choice Voting, Increased Ethics and Transparency, and Increased Voter Participation. Learn more about our work at www.RepresentMaryland.org

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miler, Treasurer