



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

January 29, 2021

Delegate Anne Kaiser, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: HB493 – Information

Delegate Kaiser and Committee Members:

My name is Katherine Berry. I am the Election Director in Carroll County and the co-chair of the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) Legislative Committee. MAEO represents the local boards of elections throughout the State of Maryland. I am writing today representing myself and MAEO in opposition to HB493 – Election Law – Voting Locations – Accessibility by Public Transportation and Voters with Disabilities.

This bill would require that a drop box, early voting center and polling place be no further than 500 feet from a public transportation route when possible.

MAEO, and particularly the local boards whose counties are primarily public transportation, feel that the following items are of concern and should be considered before bill passage.

1. Local boards who have fixed public transportation routes would be required to prioritize placing drop boxes and polling locations within 500 feet of a stop. In some places of the State, this may not be feasible because buildings and locations may not meet all of the required compliance and security guidelines.
2. Some local boards who have fixed public transportation routes do not have routes that go to each polling location and/or drop box location currently.
3. Many counties do not have fixed transportation routes, so the bill is not immediately applicable to them. It could result in some like size and density populated counties to find disparities in the number of polling locations or drop boxes.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please contact me at (410)386-2958 or Katherine.berry@maryland.gov.