

February 2, 2021

**Testimony on HB 493
Election Law - Voting Locations –
Accessibility by Public Transportation and Voters With Disabilities
Ways and Means**

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 493, which would require the local boards of elections in eligible counties to place secure ballot drop boxes and official polling places no more than 500 feet from a public transportation station or stop.

Given the unprecedented and, at times, unconstitutional voter suppression efforts during and after the presidential election, there has been an increase in legislation that centers the accessibility and equity of the voting process in the state of Maryland, most significant of those being HB 493.

HB 493 would ensure that official ballot drop boxes would be placed in polling locations and in a manner that is accessible to disabled voters and to those that rely on public transportation; both of whom might not have the privilege of owning or operating a vehicle of their own. The very purpose of this bill is to no longer place further barriers and burdens on the voter who might not be able-bodied or access to a car, thus making the right to vote of every Marylander that much more protected and accessible. With hope, secure drop boxes will become a permanent staple in the elections process, and provide a supplemental layer of transparency to the voters and public.

Voting is a fundamental right and we appreciate the continued focus by this committee in ensuring access to voting for all citizens. For these reasons, we request a favorable report.