



# Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

January 19, 2021

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

## **RE: HB247 - Oppose**

Delegate Kaiser and Committee Members:

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) has taken opposition to **HB247 – Election Law – Voting Order Priority – Individuals Who Need Extra Assistance**. As written, this bill would require Chief Judges in each polling location to determine and give voting order priority to individuals who have a mobility problem, are accompanied by a child with a disability, and any other situation as outlined in the bill. It would require SBE to adopt regulations to give notice to voters that there is a voting order priority for election day and early voting and outline requirements for training election judges.

During the 2020 Presidential General Election, many counties in Maryland were encountered with historic lines that required extra election judges be present just to maintain line organization and social distancing. Counties were given place cards to accommodate voters who may have been unable to stand in line for a period. To accomplish this, the election judges would ask if anyone needed to sit inside and wait their turn. For those that chose this method, a voter or election judge would take a place card and stand in line on behalf of the voter who was unable to wait in line. The voter then took a seat inside the building at the front of the line and waited their turn. From personal experience in Carroll County, this worked very well, but required additional election judges to manage.

Allowing people to move to the front of the line for any reason could create mass amounts of confusion and frustration for voters who may have waited in line for a long period of time. In addition, Chief Judges do not desire to work in the capacity of determining if a person has a disability or not. The Board of Elections works very hard to ensure that all voters are treated equally and without singling anyone out to the best of our ability. Our election judges also work very hard to ensure that voters are processed quickly and efficiently.

MAEO also has particular concern if assisted living facilities were to mass transit groups at a time to a vote center that already has a line which happened in several counties in 2020 including Prince George's County.

For these reasons, MAEO will be supporting **HB245 - Election Judge Training and Signs – Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance** but cannot support this bill: HB247.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please give me a call at 410-386-2958, or via e-mail at [Katherine.berry@maryland.gov](mailto:Katherine.berry@maryland.gov).