



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony for HB1005: Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Number Required
Ways and Means Committee

Good afternoon Madam Chair, Vice Chair, and distinguished members of the committee. I am Del. Brian Crosby and it's an honor to present House Bill 1005 entitled Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Number Required.

This bill simply adds an additional, intermediary tier in the number of early voting centers required based on a county's population of registered voters. Currently, any county with fewer than 125,000 registered voters is only required to have one early voting center, while those with more than 125,000 registered voters must provide at least three. My bill would require that counties between 70,000 and 125,000 registered voters maintain at least two locations, which reflects a workability concern at the local level that we have seen a few geographically large or midsize counties by population grapple with over the past few years.

As you've heard me say before in this committee, my county contains only one early voting location, despite being one of the largest in the state by area, and despite our rapidly growing population. To make matters worse, the early voting center is located some distance from our most populated area of Lexington Park and Great Mills. This creates an additional, unnecessary obstacle for my residents who just want to engage in their civic duty, especially poor, elderly, and/or disabled residents, and it could be remedied by an additional early voting center. As I mentioned earlier, some midsize counties – such as Carroll and Charles – or physically large counties – such as Garrett and Queen Anne – already address this issue by maintaining a second early voting center some distance from the seat of county government and near major population centers like Kent Island or Waldorf. This is a good stopgap measure, but voting accessibility shouldn't depend on your county of residence, and the current threshold for a second voting center is too high.

We should remove obstacles for our constituents so that voting is as accessible and convenient as possible. Counties are already moving in this direction on their own, so for these reasons, I urge the committee for a favorable report on HB1005.