

TESTIMONY OPPOSING BILL SB0532 - UNFAVORABLE
Election Law – Polling Places – Proof of Identity

TO: Chair Pinksy, Vice Chair Kagan, and
members of the Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Chris Apple
7001 Cradlerock Farm Court
Columbia, MD 21045
District 13

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In 2020 I knocked on doors for a Baltimore City Council candidate. We found that many residents, especially older people, do not check state websites or the news before heading out to vote. They simply go to the same place they've voted for decades. Many were unaware their regular polling places were closed due to COVID-19. Many do not have, or are unable to use, technology that would inform them of any new ID requirements. If this law is enacted, I think confusion would reign, forcing many legitimate voters to cast provisional ballots. Once that happens, I am gravely concerned that all those provisional ballots will later be misattributed to "evidence" of mass voter fraud.

Voter ID laws deprive many Americans of the right to vote, and have disparate impact on poor voters, disabled voters, and minorities.¹ Voter ID laws, while perhaps well-intentioned, have unfortunately become barriers to democracy that harm vulnerable classes of people. Many poorer voters do not have the resources to obtain identification; even though the ID itself is free, it requires time and money to go to a place where IDs are issued. Even though the proposed law would accept many forms of ID, it would still present a barrier to some. For example, not everyone has a utility bill or bank account in their name. They may live in a household where someone else manages the finances.

The good news is our elections are *already* secure. Maryland has very few known cases of voter fraud.^{2 3} One website found less than one instance of voter fraud *per year* in Maryland.⁴

This bill would greatly harm voting rights in Maryland, and would not make our elections any more secure than they already are. I respectfully urge the committee to oppose it.

¹ American Civil Liberties Union. *Oppose Voter ID Legislation - Fact Sheet*.
<https://www.aclu.org/other/oppose-voter-id-legislation-fact-sheet>

² Amara, Kate. "Expert: Maryland hasn't had widespread fraud with in-person or mail-in voting."
<https://www.wbalte.com/article/expert-says-no-widespread-voting-fraud-in-maryland/34226640#>

³ Tan, Rebecca. "Md. elections officials say video's allegation of ballot fraud is untrue. But it's already gone viral."
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/ballot-fraud-denied-montgomery-county/2020/10/21/aee4de64-13dd-11eb-bc10-40b25382f1be_story.html

⁴ Heritage Foundation. *Election Fraud Cases*. <https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud/search?state=MD>