



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Ways and Means Committee

In Support of HB328
Elections – Polling Place Location Restrictions – Repeal
February 8, 2022, pm

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Washington, and fellow members of the Ways and Means Committee,

For the record - I am Delegate Dana Jones.

I come before you today with a bill that would help our State and local boards of elections make voting more accessible to voters.

Finding locations for early voting can be a tedious and difficult task. The State Board of Election (SBE) must take a long list of factors into consideration when evaluating each location including: high-speed internet access, parking availability, a backup power source, cell phone reception quality, access to landlines, and if the facility is large enough to accommodate the check-in and voting process?

Community centers throughout the state such as American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) halls meet the many requirements laid out by SBE and would be perfect polling locations. However, these establishments often serve alcohol and current state law bars early voting centers in any building or part of any building used or occupied by an establishment that holds an alcoholic beverages license. Even if the establishments would cease the sales of alcohol during the days where voting would take place.

The current law does not allow for the nuances that can often go into choosing a polling location. This is an issue that is best suited for regulations discussed and designed by the State Board of SBE, which give better insight into each unique individual situation rather than having rigid laws override their discretion.

Additionally, I am offering two amendments that would make this emergency legislation to ensure that these new standards are in effect for the upcoming election cycle and to clarify that SBE must adopt regulations that govern the use of buildings with an alcoholic beverage license as polling locations.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bipartisan bill to make voting more accessible here in Maryland.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones" with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones