

February 8, 2022

Testimony on HB 328
Elections – Polling Place Location Restrictions - Repeal
Ways and Means

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in support of HB 328, which would repeal restrictions on holding an election in a building used, owned, or occupied by an establishment that holds a license to serve alcoholic beverages.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission reported that more than 230,000 polling places were used in the 2018 general election, with less than 1% of those locations being election offices – the vast majority of poll sites took place in public buildings like schools or churches. While Maryland law requires that public buildings be used for poll sites unless there are none that are suitable, it also currently strictly prohibits a polling place from being within 100 feet of a location where alcohol is served to the public. This means that many otherwise prime sites in terms of location and accessibility- like malls and multipurpose arenas – are ineligible to be used as polling sites. HB 328 would remedy this by removing outdated prohibition-era restrictions from our state’s law books, creating new options for polling sites on Election Day that will likely help alleviate the strain on pre-existing polling locations.

We believe that this is common sense legislation that will making the process of voting more convenient and accessible for all eligible Maryland residents. For these reasons, we recommend a favorable report.