

HB 702 - Election Judges - Training and Signs - Ac

Uploaded by: Aleksandra Petrovic

Position: FAV

February 15, 2022

Testimony on HB 702
Election Judges – Training and Signs – Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance
Ways and Means

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland support HB 702 which would improve the process for training election judges on the methods used to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters as well as require the State Board of Elections to make clear signage available in the following locations: outside of the entrance of the building, inside of polling sites, and near the check-in desk. The multiple sign locations will ensure voters are made aware of the assistance available to them when voting. We recommend not limiting the specific sizing of the sign itself so that it leaves flexibility as to where the sign is posted.

Election judges play a vital role in our elections. They ensure fair and accessible elections for all Marylanders and are trained to protect the integrity of the election process. While many Marylanders stepped up to serve in the critical role during the 2020 election, the recruitment and adequate training of judges has long been an issue in the state. This has led to reports of polls opening late, long lines, judges failing to show up on election days and a number of other incidents – including elderly voters and those voters with disabilities not being provided with adequate assistance or even being made aware of the assistance available to them when voting.

HB 702 aims to address these by not only ensuring election judges receive improved training on how to apply these methods, but also that voters are made aware of the assistance available to them when at a polling site. We found that during the 2020 general election, voters were unaware they could have a placeholder in the instances where they are unable to stand for long periods of time, as well as other options available to them. The additional signage would help to address this, and we encourage images to be incorporated for those voters who are unable to read. Making these signs available in multiple languages will also ensure voters whose first language is not English are also made aware of the assistance available to them.

This bill will help ensure future Maryland elections run smoothly, especially for elderly and disabled voters who vote in person.

We urge a favorable report.

2022 JCRC HB 702- Election Judges- Training and Si

Uploaded by: Ashlie Bagwell

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 702 –
*Election Judges – Training and Signs –
Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance*
House Ways and Means Committee
February 15, 2022**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish organizations and synagogues throughout Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on freedom, justice, and pluralism. We work tirelessly throughout the entire Greater Washington area to advocate for our agencies that serve the most vulnerable residents, support our Jewish day schools and community centers, and to campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the entire Jewish community.

Voting rights are the cornerstone of our democracy. The JCRC has a long tradition of expanding voter access and combatting voter suppression. The agency also maintains a commitment to prioritizing the needs and rights of people with disabilities. The JCRC is committed to advancing and supporting policy measures to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve maximum independence and to break down barriers to opportunity and inclusion.

Given these principles, the JCRC strongly supports HB 702 which requires election judges to be trained on the different methods that can be used to accommodate elderly and disabled voters at polling sites. The bill also requires that signs be posted at polling locations stating that individualized accommodations may be made for those in need of assistance. For these reasons, we ask the committee to support HB 702.

HB 702

Uploaded by: Delegate Terri Hill

Position: FAV

February 15, 2022

Support: HB702

Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice-chair Washington, and Committee Members,

HB702

- Requires that training for election judges include oral instruction and written material on a range of methods that may be used to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting;
- Ensures that judges assigned to a voting site are made aware of the accommodations available at that site;
- Requires that the specific methods of accommodation available to a voter in need of assistance at each voting site be prominently displayed so that a voter in need of assistance can be aware of the accommodation options available.

This body, and this committee in particular, has done important work over the years in ensuring the right of eligible voters to exercise the franchise and this bill is one small but important part of completing that work. While the state and local election boards do provide accommodations for disabled, elderly, and others voters who need it, but they vary from site to site. Voters are not always clear as to what kind of assistance is possible and are sometimes too embarrassed or discourage to ask.

Worse, there have been times when a well-meaning poll worker has failed to offer an available accommodation because they either did not know about it or did not think about it in the moment. Although these occasions are likely rare, they need not occur at all. HB702 aims to make such incidents a thing of the past.

It is not prescriptive as to the type of accommodations that should be offered. The local boards retain the discretion to make those determinations. It simply requires that that information be available to the voter without their having to ask, and that the workers be aware of them too.

The bill was combined with a similar bill and passed the House last session but not the Senate. The other sponsor and I believe that this stripped down bill should be able to pass both chambers as it will allow the voters to benefit without being particularly burdensome on the local election boards in an otherwise very busy year for them.

I urge a favorable report on HB702.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. P. ...", is written below the text.

2022-02-11 HB 702 (Support).pdf

Uploaded by: Hannibal Kemerer

Position: FAV

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410-576-6584

February 15, 2022

To: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

From: The Office of the Attorney General

Re: HB 702 – Elections – Training and Signs – Accommodations for Voters in Need of
Assistance – Support

The Office of Attorney General (the “OAG”) urges this Committee to favorably report HB 702.

House Bill 702 would require the State Board of Elections (“SBE”) to specify in election judge training materials the methods an election judge may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting at a polling site. It would also require SBE to develop and post signage at polling places identifying these methods to voters.

The in-person voting process may be difficult for elderly voters or voters with disabilities. Anything that can reasonably be done to provide information to such voters about the kinds of assistance that may be available to them is worth pursuing. This bill would provide additional means for communicating this information to voters—first by arming election judges with the knowledge that they can then give to voters, and second by requiring signage at polling places explicitly containing such information. And it does so in a manner that appears to impose minimal additional cost or administrative burden on SBE or on the local boards of elections.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on House Bill 702.

cc: Members of the Ways and Means Committee

HB0702_Represent_Maryland_FAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Justin Gallardo

Position: FAV

REPRESENT MARYLAND

#FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY .ORG

BILL NUMBER: HB0702

BILL TITLE: Election Judges - Training and Signs -
Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

BILL SPONSOR: Delegate Terri Hill

POSITION: FAVORABLE

February 15, 2022

Honorable Chairwoman Vanessa Atterbeary, Vice-Chairman Alonzo Washington, and Ways and Means Committee Members:

Represent Maryland supports this bill to provide guidance to election judges for voters who are disabled and/or in need of assistance. Access to voting should be accessible regardless of age or ability and we want them to exercise their right to vote; therefore, we ask for a favorable report!

Sincerely,

Justin Gallardo, Volunteer
Represent Maryland
Legislative District 8

Represent Maryland is a grassroots anti-corruption group of citizen advocates that #FightForDemocracy in Maryland. Our democracy solutions include: Public Election Funds, Independent Redistricting, Special Elections, Ranked Choice Voting, Increased Ethics and Transparency, and Increased Voter Participation. Learn more about our work at www.RepresentMaryland.org

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miler, Treasurer

HB702

Uploaded by: Marijane Monck

Position: FAV

Indivisible **HoCo** **MD**



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB702 - Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Hill

POSITION: FAVORABLE

By: Marijane Monck, Defend Democracy Team Co-Facilitator, Indivisible Howard County

Date: February 10, 2022

Indivisible Howard County supports HB702. This bill provides for signage stating the various accommodations and assistance available to elderly and disabled voters and includes training materials for election judges explaining the variety of accommodations they can employ.

We believe voting is the bedrock of our democracy and every voter deserves the opportunity to cast their vote, regardless of their age or disability.

election law training and signs HB 702. Testimony

Uploaded by: Mathew Rice

Position: FAV



House Ways and Means Committee
Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance
HB 702

Position: support
sponsored by Delegate Hill
February 15, 2022

The Arc Maryland. Maryland's largest statewide advocacy organization advocating for the rights of individuals with intellectual/and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) offers. This written testimony in support of HB 702 which would mandate signage at polling places which informs, prospective voters, and the general public about the accommodations which are available to voters who may need extra assistance. We also support the provisions in this Bill that create training standards for election judges around how to inform voters about the accommodations to which they may be entitled. Our right to vote is our most sacred constitutional right. The general public, and especially people with disabilities and others who may need extra assistance may not always know what their rights are. In conclusion, the Arc supports this legislation because if you know the supports your entitled to you will be more effective in casting your ballot and participating in our democracy. This is an equity issue therefore we ask the committee for a favorable report. If you have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. You can contact me at

Mat Rice
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HB 702_ Election Judges - Training and Signs - Acc

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee

HB 702: Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

February 15, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates changes to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. **From that perspective, the DD Council supports HB 702 as it will make voting in-person easier and more accessible for people with disabilities.**

WHAT does this legislation do?

- The bill requires that the training materials provided to election judges include information on the various ways that an election judge can provide assistance or accommodations to elderly voters and voters with disabilities.
- It also requires that the State Board of Elections develop signs that must be posted at specific locations at a polling place that clearly explain how election judges can provide assistance and accommodations to voters with disabilities.

WHY is this legislation important?

- All Marylanders must have equitable access to their fundamental right to vote.
- Election judges and staff working at polling places should be knowledgeable and aware of the ways to support voters with disabilities and able to provide assistance and information that allows all voters to easily, privately, and fairly participate in the electoral process.
- It will promote an inclusive and supportive environment at polling locations.

HB 702 is an important step to ensure that people with disabilities have the resources necessary to exercise their fundamental right to vote. For that reason, the DD Council supports HB 702.

The DD Council recommends that any signs developed for the general public be written in plain language so that they are accessible to everyone.

Contact: Zach Hands, Communications and Legislative Liaison, zhands.mddc@gmail.com

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Kalani Brown, Chairperson • Rachel London, Esq., Executive Director