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DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 31, 2023

The Honorable Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary

Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee

6 Bladen Street, Room 131

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 0041

Good afternoon, Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Washington, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams of District 22, and I will be testifying today in favor of **House Bill 0041**, also known as **Election Law- Curbside Voting - Establishment**. This legislation would make curbside voting an option for people with disabilities and expecting mothers by requiring local election boards to establish at least one accessible voting location in each county and in Baltimore City.

This legislation comes at a time when voting rights are increasingly under attack in various states across the country. It was made a crime to pass out food or water to people waiting in line to vote in Georgia. Since the voting process can sometimes take hours, such an event would pose a challenge for expecting mothers and individuals with disabilities. Laws were passed to impose a criminal penalty on anyone found to be returning ballots for voters in need of assistance in Iowa and Kansas. It is incredible to see that in the 21st century, after decades of advocacy to protect the right to vote, laws are still being passed to make voting less accessible to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

This bill is based on Virginia House Bill 1998, which was introduced in the 2009 legislative session to expand voting access. North Carolina, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin have also made the ballot box more accessible by establishing curbside voting.

The sole intention of this bill is to ensure everyone is guaranteed the fundamental right to participate in our democratic process. By establishing curbside voting in Maryland, we can ensure that Marylanders that are expecting or have a disability can practice their right to vote in the way that works best for them.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 0041.

Sincerely,

Nicole A. Williams, Esq.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.