



# Maryland Forward Party

January 31, 2025

## Maryland Forward Party

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### **SB 0066:**

Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)

Position: Favorable

Dear Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Forward Party and our 6,000 Maryland supporters. Forward Party is among the fastest growing political organizations in the United States and in Maryland. Our organization is dedicated to promoting and enhancing our democracy in Maryland and we believe that all Maryland voters should have an opportunity to be heard. We support efforts that will ultimately make voting safer, more accessible, and empowering for Maryland residents. Providing additional accommodations to support inclusive participation should be made to help increase voter turnout and engagement. We commend Senator Ellis for introducing this crucial legislation that will ensure Maryland's elections are truly accessible to all voters—especially our elderly citizens and voters with disabilities.



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As it stands, many elderly and disabled voters face significant challenges at polling places, including long wait times, inadequate seating, and a lack of clear accommodations. These barriers discourage participation and disproportionately impact voters who already face mobility and accessibility challenges.

SB 66 directly addresses these concerns by requiring the State Board of Elections to develop standardized guidelines for expedited voting, dedicated lines, priority seating, and proper election judge training. Additionally, the bill mandates real-time feedback collection to ensure immediate improvements during elections. This is a proactive and common-sense solution that enhances efficiency, equity, and voter confidence.

This bill does not create an undue burden on election officials but rather improves election administration by streamlining voting for those who need accommodations. The ability to vote is a fundamental right, and we must do everything possible to remove barriers for elderly and disabled voters.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 66 to help make Maryland's elections more inclusive, efficient, and accessible. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions. Respectfully

PJ Benenati

Maryland Forward Party, Chair