

NICOLE A. WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus

Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 27, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 317

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and the members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams, and I will be testifying in favor of House Bill 317, also known as **Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program**. This bill would create a pilot program to look at the designation of curbside voting locations during primary and general elections. These designated areas must be determined at least six months in advance and are subject to approval by the State Board. This would expand voting access for individuals with mobility limitations who still wish to vote in person.

Twenty-seven bi-partisan states, plus Washington D.C., already require or allow curbside voting. Each election cycle, some individuals in Maryland are forced to overcome physical hardships to exercise their right to vote. Some may decide not to participate at all due to the struggle that in-person voting would cause them. While we do have vote by mail, ballots are not automatically mailed to each voter in the state, so if a voter fails to submit the request form, they have to physically go vote either during early voting or on election day. According to the Election Assistance Commission, during the 2020 election, with the usage of absentee ballots, there was a 62% voter turnout among people with disabilities. Additional methods may increase the number of people with disabilities who vote in future elections. Data from the American Community Survey shows that approximately 11% of people in Maryland (about 655,840 individuals) have a cognitive, hearing, vision, or ambulatory disability, which can impact their ability to contribute to the state vote.

Curbside voting is effective for individuals who are physically unable to go inside to vote. This bill helps people to vote comfortably without unnecessary stressors. This can also assist pregnant persons, elderly individuals, and those with life-threatening illnesses who do not see going inside a crowded building or standing in long lines as a safe option for them. Passing this legislation would allow all individuals to exercise their right to vote in person and

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significantly contribute to the election outcomes. Other states allow this type of voting safely and securely.

Since the original introduction of this bill during this legislative session, it has been amended to include a provision that the State Board of Elections and local boards emphasize in voter communications that curbside voting is primarily an accommodation for voters with disabilities as defined in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as voters with limited mobility and elderly voters.

These individuals are citizens of Maryland and deserve the right to vote. This bill will encourage these individuals to perform their civic duty.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 317.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicole Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.