

# **2025 SB0066 Testimony For 2025-02-05.pdf**

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: FAV

## **SB0066 – Favorable**

Honorable Senators

I support:

- requiring the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for the local boards of election to implement a process to accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities at each early voting center and polling place;
- requiring the local boards to implement the guidelines and collect feedback on the process from elderly voters and voters with disabilities so they can make immediate adjustments to the process.

Based on the bill, I meet the definition of elderly, but currently, not the definition of being disabled.

However, I have had my mobility restricted temporarily from a broken foot and a sore back. Fortunately, so far, my age has not hampered my ability to stand in line and process my ballot at a voting station. Also, neither injury occurred during the latest election period. However, if the injuries had occurred during the election, it would have been beneficial if there had been a place to sit until it was my turn to check-in, and to sit until a voting station was open.

While I can imagine the benefits of this bill, it would have been informative to have an estimate of the costs or whether existing voting centers would have the space to create seating areas for seniors and disabled. Assuming that the boards have the logistics and funding to make the changes required by this bill, please enter a favorable report for SB0066.

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Legislative District 30B  
February 5, 2025

# **SB 66 - Ellis Written Testimony - Final(1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Arthur Ellis

Position: FAV

ARTHUR ELLIS, CPA  
*Legislative District 28*  
Charles County

DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

Finance Committee

*Senate Chair*

Joint Committee on the  
Management of Public Funds

Chair, Charles, St. Mary's and Calvert  
Counties' Senate Delegation



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
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Sponsor Written Testimony: Favorable

Senate Bill 66: Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland

January 30, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kegan, and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

I am honored to present Senate Bill 66, the Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland, which seeks to modernize and enhance Maryland's election process by ensuring a more inclusive, efficient, and accessible voting experience for all eligible voters. This bill is a proactive step toward eliminating barriers that disproportionately impact elderly voters, individuals with disabilities, and others who may have difficulty waiting in long lines at polling places. Voting is a fundamental right, and Maryland must take every necessary step to guarantee that all eligible citizens can exercise their right to vote without undue hardship.

Senate Bill 66 directs the State Board of Elections to establish clear, enforceable guidelines requiring local election boards to implement accessibility and expedited voting measures at every early voting center and Election Day polling place across the state. Specifically, the bill mandates the creation of designated priority lines for elderly voters and individuals with disabilities, ensuring that they do not have to endure unnecessarily long wait times. These priority areas will be marked with conspicuous signage, and polling places will be required to provide seating for those who need it while waiting to vote. These adjustments are straightforward yet impactful, helping to make the voting process smoother and more accommodating for vulnerable populations.

In addition to structural improvements at polling places, SB 66 also requires that election judges receive specialized training on best practices for assisting voters with disabilities and elderly voters. This training will include guidance on using accessible voting machines, effective communication strategies, and compliance with federal and state laws, such as the Americans

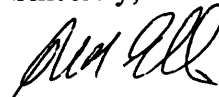
with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). Proper training is essential to ensuring that all poll workers understand their role in supporting voters who may need additional assistance.

Furthermore, this legislation calls for enhanced voter assistance measures. Many individuals with limited mobility, visual or hearing impairments, or cognitive disabilities often face challenges at the polls due to a lack of trained support staff or appropriate accommodations. SB 66 ensures that all polling places provide consistent and dignified assistance to voters in need, reducing confusion and frustration while promoting a fair and accessible election process. Additionally, the bill directs election officials to assess and address high-traffic polling locations, implementing strategies to reduce congestion and improve accessibility. This could include adding more voting machines, offering curbside voting options, or deploying specialized assistance teams to help facilitate a smooth voting experience.

The need for this bill is clear. Across Maryland, long wait times, inadequate accessibility measures, and inconsistent poll worker training continue to create obstacles for voters who already face challenges in their daily lives. While Maryland has made progress in improving election accessibility, there is still work to be done to ensure that no voter is disenfranchised due to physical limitations or unnecessary administrative barriers. SB 66 is not about changing voting eligibility rules or creating new bureaucratic hurdles; rather, it is about making sure that every Marylander has an equal opportunity to participate in our democracy.

In conclusion, Senate Bill 66 is a common-sense measure that will enhance Maryland's commitment to fair and accessible elections. By ensuring that elderly voters and individuals with disabilities receive the accommodations they need, we are upholding the integrity of our democratic process and reinforcing the principle that every vote matters. I respectfully urge this committee to issue a favorable report on SB 66 and support efforts to make voting in Maryland more accessible and efficient for all.

Sincerely,



Arthur Ellis

# **DRM Testimony - Support - SB 66 Accessible and Exp**

Uploaded by: Braden Stinar

Position: FAV

**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**February 5, 2025**

**SB 66 – Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly  
Voters and Voters with Disabilities**

**(Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

**Position: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the Protection & Advocacy agency in Maryland, federally mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM works to increase opportunities for Marylanders with disabilities to be part of their communities through voting by advocating for equal access to the ballot box.

DRM strongly supports SB 66, which requires the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for local boards of election in support of older adults and individuals with disabilities who seek to engage in the voting process. This bill will require local election boards to seek feedback from voters with disabilities to identify and address barriers to access. By mandating the State Board of Elections to establish clear guidelines, the bill ensures that local boards implement consistent processes to accommodate and expedite voting for these individuals at early voting centers and polling places. This ongoing commitment to accessibility will help improve the voting experience each election cycle, fostering greater participation and equity in the electoral process.

Over the past few election cycles, the number of voters with disabilities has continued to grow as access to the ballot box expands. In 2020, 62% of individuals with a disability turned out to vote. A significant increase when compared to 56% of voting age individuals with a disability who took part in

the electoral process in 2016.<sup>1</sup> With 40.2 million eligible voters with disabilities in 2024, making up nearly 1 in 6 voters, election policies must prioritize accessibility to ensure participation. Senate Bill 66 (2025) aligns with this goal by providing expedited voting options, priority seating, and improved election worker training, all of which could contribute to further increasing turnout.<sup>2</sup>

As more Americans with disabilities continue to engage in the electoral process, it is imperative to include specific requirements for election poll workers to follow in support of the unique needs these voters may present. Over the past election cycle, DRM received reports from community members relating to problematic interactions with poll workers around the state. DRM has worked with the State Board of Elections and share our concerns with them directly. Through this communication, it has become clear that election poll workers are open to receiving guidance on how to support voters with disabilities. Providing clear guidelines for election poll workers will equip them with the knowledge and confidence to effectively assist individuals with disabilities throughout the voting process. Additionally, requiring local boards to gather feedback from community members about their voting experiences will ensure that voters with disabilities have a meaningful voice in the electoral process. This ongoing input will help drive continuous improvements to voting methods, fostering greater accessibility and inclusion over time.

DRM is truly excited to see this legislation intended to support older adults and community members with disabilities. We are able, should the State Board of Elections need technical assistance, guidance or resources in providing support with the establishment of the proposed guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eac.gov/news/2021/07/07/new-data-177-million-americans-disabilities-voted-2020-significant-increase-over>.

<sup>2</sup> [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/Program\\_Disability\\_Research/Disability\\_Electorate\\_Projections\\_Report\\_Oct2024.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/Program_Disability_Research/Disability_Electorate_Projections_Report_Oct2024.pdf).

Respectfully submitted,

Braden Stinar, Esq.

Attorney

Disability Rights Maryland

# **IL Written Testimony - SB 66 - Favorable.pdf**

Uploaded by: Chris Kelter

Position: FAV



**SB 66: Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

**Testimony of the Maryland Independent Living Network**

**SUPPORT – Favorable**

Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee, February 5, 2025

The Maryland Independent Living Network is a coalition of the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council and the seven Maryland-based Centers for Independent Living (CIL). CILs are created by federal law. CILs work to enhance the civil rights and quality of services for people with disabilities. There are seven CILs located throughout Maryland, operated by and for people with disabilities. CILs provide Information and Referral, Advocacy, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills training, and Transition Services to individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Independent Living Network submits this written testimony in **support** of SB 66.

SB 66 requires the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for the local boards of election to implement a process to accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities at each early voting center and polling place. The bill's provisions require the local boards to implement the guidelines and collect feedback on the process from elderly voters and voters with disabilities and make immediate adjustments to the process and requires the training program for election judges to include instruction on best practices for assisting elderly voters and voters with disabilities.

The Independent Living Network believes it is imperative to ensure accessible and equitable voting for all citizens. Increase participation in voting ensures all voices are heard.

Currently, accessibility can vary significantly from one polling place to another. Establishing statewide guidelines will create a consistent and predictable experience for elderly voters and voters with disabilities, regardless of their location. This standardization is crucial for promoting voter confidence and participation.

Elderly voters and voters with disabilities often face unique challenges at polling places, including long waiting times, physical barriers, and complex voting equipment. Expediting the voting process for these individuals is not about giving them preferential treatment; it's about

leveling the playing field and ensuring they can exercise their fundamental right to vote without undue hardship. This might include dedicated check-in lines, prioritized access to accessible voting booths, and assistance with ballot marking when needed.

Requiring local boards to collect feedback from elderly voters and voters with disabilities is essential. This feedback loop will provide invaluable insights into the effectiveness of the implemented guidelines and identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, mandating immediate adjustments based on this feedback ensures that the process remains responsive to the needs of the community. This approach is key to creating a truly accessible and user-friendly voting system.

The State Board of Elections will be responsible for developing the specific guidelines. The State Board should address physical accessibility, communication accessibility, voting equipment accessibility, and poll worker training.

**Physical Accessibility:** Guidelines should address issues such as ramps, accessible parking, appropriate signage, and adequate lighting at all polling places.

**Communication Accessibility:** Considerations should be given to voters with visual or auditory impairments including providing materials in alternative formats (large print, Braille, audio) and ensuring poll workers are trained to assist voters with communication needs.

**Equipment Accessibility:** Voting equipment should be accessible to individuals with a range of disabilities, including those with limited dexterity or visual impairments. This may involve offering assistive devices or alternative voting methods.

**Poll Worker Training:** Comprehensive training for poll workers is crucial. They must be equipped to understand the needs of elderly voters and voters with disabilities and provide appropriate assistance with respect and sensitivity. Training should cover topics such as disability etiquette, communication strategies, and the proper use of accessible voting equipment.

In the development of these guidelines the State Board of Elections should seek out and collaborate with disability advocacy organizations and senior citizen groups. These organizations and groups possess valuable expertise and can provide crucial input to ensure the guidelines are comprehensive and effective. Furthermore, the State Board should provide adequate resources to local boards of election to support the implementation of these guidelines and training programs.

#### An Example of the Current State of Accessibility

An individual with a disability that uses a powerchair reports that increased participation in voting has increased convenience for most voters but has the opposite effect for those who benefit most from accessibility. Increased voter participation at polling places creates crowds at

voting locations which creates additional difficulties for powerchair users to navigate the polling place. It is common to go to a voting station and not find any wheelchair accessible parking as the current number of wheelchair accessible parking is insufficient for the number of individuals that go to polling places during early voting and election day, often leaving people with disabilities waiting for 20 minutes or longer before they're able to enter the polling location. Once inside a polling location, weaving in and out of crowds to get to the check in desk is stressful. More stress is added when having to participate in the voting process in this way, it becomes more of an inconvenience than a privilege. Availability and access to dedicated persons or teams who are knowledgeable about accommodations for people with disabilities and older citizens would create ease during the voting process. The use of dedicated lines or areas would conveniently streamline this process in a positive way. It would also likely entice even more people with disabilities and older citizens to vote at voting polls.

We appreciate the consideration of these comments.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** SB 66 and requests a favorable report.

**Contact Information:**

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Danielle Bustos, MDYLF Coordinator  
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# **Maryland Catholic Conference\_FAV\_SB66.pdf**

Uploaded by: Diane Arias

Position: FAV



**February 5, 2025**

**Senate Bill 66**

**Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee**

**Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

**Senate Bill 66** requires the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for the local boards of election to implement a process to accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities at each early voting center and polling place; requiring the local boards to implement the guidelines and collect feedback on the process from elderly voters and voters with disabilities and make immediate adjustments to the process.

This bill aims to ensure equitable voting opportunities for individuals who face challenges due to disabilities or advanced age. Elderly voters and those with disabilities, such as visual or auditory impairments, often require additional support during the voting process. Without proper accommodations, these individuals may encounter significant barriers that discourage or even prevent them from participating in elections.

For example, voting alongside the general public during busy election periods can be overwhelming and stressful for those who need in-person assistance. Long wait times and crowded environments can create unnecessary complexity for individuals requiring help with navigation, communication, or accessing voting equipment. If adequate assistance is unavailable, it increases the likelihood that elderly or disabled voters may be unable to cast their ballots. Additionally, the physical accessibility of polling locations is a critical factor. In some geographic areas, polling places may lack sufficient parking accommodations or may include hazardous areas that are particularly challenging for elderly voters or those with mobility issues. Collecting feedback from voters and volunteers can help identify and address these gaps, ensuring that polling locations are safe, accessible, and welcoming to all.

Equally important is providing comprehensive training for election volunteers on the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other best practices for accommodating voters with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Well-trained volunteers can better safeguard the voting experience for elderly and disabled individuals, ensuring they can exercise their fundamental right to vote without unnecessary obstacles. By implementing clear guidelines and proactive measures, this legislation would create a more inclusive and accessible voting process, empowering elderly and disabled voters to fully participate in both local and national elections. This is a vital step in promoting equity and upholding the democratic values of our society.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference asks for a favorable report on **SB 66**.

Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ada.gov/topics/voting/>

# **SB0066 Election Law Polling Place Procedures.pdf**

Uploaded by: Dorothy Plantz

Position: FAV

**SB0066 - Election Law- Polling Place Procedures- Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**  
**EEE Committee**  
**Favorable**

Dear Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair, Honorable Cheryl Kagan, Vice Chair and committee members:

As a citizen over 70 years of age and the parent of an adult son with multiple disabilities I am requesting that you vote in favor of the Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland (**SB0066**).

Through this bill guidelines would be established to implement a process that would accommodate and expediate voting for the elderly and individuals with disabilities. The primary strengths of this bill are:

- The process would be implemented at **each early voting center and polling place** which provides access to all registered voters who fall into these two categories. No partiality would be given to particular voters because of their location in the state.
- The bill provides guidelines for collecting feedback from voters in order to make immediate adjustments to the process at the particular sites. Making these types of adjustments immediately provide additional feedback in a real time setting which is a “win” for all.
- Election judge training would include best practices for assisting voters which would not only improve the experience for elderly and citizens with disabilities but all voters.

Please vote in favor of **SB0066** so that our elderly voters may continue to vote and those with disabilities may have that opportunity to do so in an appropriate and efficient manner.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Plantz

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Dorothy.greenthumb@gmail.com

## **SB66\_AARP\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: James Campbell

Position: FAV



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**SB66 Election Law - Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters and  
Voters with Disabilities  
(Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

**FAVORABLE  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 5, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Jim Campbell, President Emeritus for AARP Maryland, and a former Maryland State Delegate. AARP Maryland supports SB66 and thanks Senator Ellis for sponsoring this legislation.

AARP Maryland represents more than 850,000 members statewide and is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization advocating for Marylanders aged 50 and older, as well as their families. Key priorities of our organization include helping all Marylanders achieve financial and health security. AARP Maryland strongly believes that all individuals have the right to be self-reliant and live with dignity in retirement. This includes the ability to vote and express one's opinion at the ballot box.

**What SB66 Does**

SB 66 requires the State Board of Elections to implement:

- A training program to include instruction on best practices for assisting elderly voters and voters with disabilities as defined in the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act; and
- Guidelines for local boards to accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities including.
  - Dedicated expedited lines for elderly voters and voters with disabilities,
  - Clearly marked signage indicating these expedited lines,
  - Priority seating in waiting areas, and
  - Specific provisions for high-traffic early voting centers.
- SB66 also requires the Board to collect feedback from elderly voters and voters with disabilities as to the efficacy of the procedures and to adjust practices as needed.

**Why it Matters**

Many times, while working the polls, I have encountered older citizens who had questions about voting procedures but were not comfortable asking questions of election judges. In some cases, persons with mobility or other challenges will not even try to vote for concern over their personal

safety or their ability to navigate the process on their own. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure the accessibility of this right to every citizen. By addressing accessibility and best practices for assisting elderly voters and voters with disabilities as outlined in the bill, these changes can create a more welcoming environment to wary voters and fulfill the promise of an engaged citizenry.

For these reasons, AARP Maryland respectfully asks the Committee to support SB66. For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Senior Director of Advocacy at [tbresnahan@aarps.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarps.org) or by calling 410.301.8451.

# **NASW Maryland - 2025 SB 66 FAV - Accessible and Ex**

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV

**Testimony Before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 5, 2025**

**Senate Bill 66  
Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities  
Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland  
\*\* Support \*\***

The National Association of Social Workers is the largest professional association of social workers in the country, and the Maryland Chapter represents social workers across the state. On behalf of the NASW-MD's Committee on Aging, we urgently and wholeheartedly support Senate Bill 66 - Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland).

This bill addresses a pressing and fundamental issue: Ensuring that elderly voters and voters with disabilities can exercise their constitutional right to vote without the physical, logistical, and systemic barriers that too often prevent their full participation. Voting is not merely a procedural activity; it is a cornerstone of our democracy.

Currently, too many Marylanders face significant obstacles at polling places. Long lines, inaccessible entrances, and insufficient support for mobility or sensory impairments disproportionately exclude older adults and individuals with disabilities. This exclusion is not hypothetical - it's happening now. A 2020 U.S. Government Accountability Office report revealed that 60% of polling places nationwide had accessibility issues. In Maryland, these barriers directly affect nearly one in four residents living with a disability and a rapidly growing population of older adults, which has increased by over 30% in the past decade.

Senate Bill 66 directly tackles these inequities by:

- Mandating accessible and prioritized entrances and paths of travel;
- Establishing expedited voting areas and times for elderly voters and voters with disabilities; and
- Requiring robust training for election workers to ensure respectful, effective support for these populations.

These are not merely improvements; they are essential changes to ensure our democracy includes every voice.

*(over)*

For many older adults and individuals with disabilities, these barriers are more than inconveniences - they are disenfranchising. Imagine a voter in a wheelchair unable to navigate a polling place or a senior with limited mobility forced to wait hours in line. These stories are not uncommon, and they represent a profound failure to uphold the dignity and rights of these Marylanders.

Maryland has the opportunity, and the responsibility, to lead the way. By enacting SB 66, we can ensure that our elections reflect the principles of accessibility, equity, and respect for all. The time to act is now. We urge you to issue a favorable report on SB 66 and ensure that no voter is left behind. Thank you for your leadership in protecting the rights of all Marylanders.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW  
Executive Director, NASW-MD

# **MGA2025 -SB66-Support-MDAC.pdf**

Uploaded by: Liz Zogby

Position: FAV



**SB 66: Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities  
(Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

**February 5, 2025**

**Position: Support**

The Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition (MDAC) is a coalition of the five Down syndrome organizations in Maryland as well as individuals with Down syndrome and their family members who have come together to advocate for improved quality of life for all individuals with Down syndrome throughout the state of Maryland.

MDAC strongly supports SB66, which would require the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for accommodating and expediting voting for elderly voters and voters for disabilities, require local boards to implement the guidelines and collect feedback from voters, and require the election judge training program to include instruction on best practices for assisting elderly voters and voters with disabilities. This bill speaks directly to one of MDAC's guiding principles: "People with Down syndrome are able to participate in all parts of community life, like voting and speaking out on important issues."

Individuals with disabilities, including those with Down syndrome, face significant barriers to exercising the franchise, including inaccessible polling places, ballots that are not written in plain language, shortages of poll workers and inadequately trained poll workers, and misunderstandings about voter eligibility. SB66 would address some of these barriers and continue to expand voter participation, a core tenet of our democratic society.

Wider knowledge about voter eligibility and the permissible support for voters with disabilities is important and can ensure that every eligible voter exercises their fundamental civil right. In Maryland, voter eligibility extends to those who are under guardianship unless they have been found by a court to be unable to communicate a desire to vote.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a voter may bring someone to assist them in voting as long as that person is not their employer, an officer or agent of their union, or an election challenger or watcher; alternatively, a voter may choose to have two election judges help them. The person providing assistance must sign the Voter Assistance Form and cannot suggest how the person should vote.<sup>2</sup>

For many people with Down syndrome, the prospects and realities of long lines and crowded polling places are an impediment to voting. Requirements for dedicated, expedited lines; clearly marked signage indicated availability of expedited services; priority seating in waiting areas; and specific provisions for high-traffic early voting centers and polling places would improve the physical accessibility of polling places and enable greater participation in elections. In addition, including instruction for election judges on best practices for assisting voters with disabilities is critically important to ensure that these voters, including those with Down syndrome, can receive accommodations and/or support if and when they wish.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Board of Elections, Voter Registration Eligibility, [https://elections.maryland.gov/voter\\_registration/index.html](https://elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> Maryland State Board of Elections, Access by Voters with Disabilities, <https://elections.maryland.gov/voting/accessibility.html>

Individuals with Down syndrome are citizens whose voices must be heard at the ballot box and by their elected officials. Improving the accessibility of our voting system is necessary to advance this goal and SB66 is an important step in the right direction.

For these reasons, MDAC strongly supports SB66.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Zogby  
Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition  
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443-691-1755

# **2025 MOTA SB 66 Senate Side (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



# Maryland Occupational Therapy Association

PO Box 36401, Towson, Maryland 21286 ♦ [mota-members.com](http://mota-members.com)

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee</b>
<b>Bill Number:</b>	<b>Senate Bill 66</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)</b>
<b>Hearing Date:</b>	<b>February 5, 2025</b>
<b>Position:</b>	<b>Support</b>

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The Maryland Occupational Therapy Association (MOTA) supports *Senate Bill 66 – Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)*. The bill will require the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for the local boards of election to implement a process to accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities. The bill will also require election judges to be given instruction on best practices for assisting elderly voters and voters with disabilities, as defined in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

Occupational therapy practitioners work to increase accessibility for patients in all aspects of everyday life. Voting is an important right that should be accessible to all Marylanders. Although voting centers in Maryland have a variety of aids, there are currently no requirements like those in this bill, including expedited lanes and priority seating for those who need such accommodations. Providing accommodations for elderly voters and voters with disabilities will go far in allowing more people to vote in Maryland.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Michael Paddy at [mpaddy@policypartners.net](mailto:mpaddy@policypartners.net).

## **SB 66 - Election Law – Polling Place Procedures –**

Uploaded by: Morgan Drayton

Position: FAV

**February 5, 2025**

**Testimony on SB 66**

**Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters with Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)  
Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Position:** Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in support of SB 66, which creates new requirements for local Boards of Elections to expedite voting and provide accommodations for elderly voters and voters with disabilities at each early voting and polling place.

SB 66 is meant to improve and expedite voting process for elderly voters and voter with disabilities, requiring the State Board of Elections to create a process to accommodate them at each Early Voting Center and polling place within the State of Maryland. Improved guidelines include the maintenance of a separate, dedicated line for elderly voters and voters with disabilities and the addition of a waiting area with priority seating for the elderly and disabled. These new standards - along with the pre-existing option to use a “placeholder” in instances where a voter is unable to stand for long periods of time – will go a long way towards making polling and early voting locations as accessible as possible to all voters.

This legislation also improves the process for training election judges on best practices used to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters, and requires local Boards of Elections to make clear signage available inside of polling sites that ensure voters are made aware of the assistance available to them when voting. We would ask the Committee to consider translating this signage into any other languages that are spoken widely within the jurisdiction, to ensure that no voter is left behind because they did not understand that there is assistance available to them.

Overall, SB 66 will help ensure future Maryland elections run smoothly, especially for elderly and disabled voters who would like to vote in-person. For these reasons, we request a favorable report.

## **SB 66 SUPPORT (1).pdf**

Uploaded by: Nikki Tyree

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE**

**SB 0066 Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters and  
Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

**POSITION – Support**

**BY: Linda T. Kohn, President**

**Date: February 5, 2025**

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active citizen participation, and that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed by law.

The League of Women voters supports public access to voting and registering to vote.

**SB 0066** requires the State Board of Elections establish guidelines for the local boards of election to implement a process to accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities at each early voting center and polling place; local boards will collect feedback on the process from elderly voters and voters with disabilities and make immediate adjustments to the process; a training program for election judges to include instruction on best practices for assisting elderly voters and voters with disabilities; and generally relating to in-person voting by elderly voters and voters with disabilities.

The League of Women Voters understands the Maryland Election Judges' training includes best practices to meet the needs of all voters, including elderly voters and voters with disabilities. However, the League also believes targeted training and voter feedback can enhance the supports available for elderly voters and voters with disabilities.

The LWVMD, representing 1000+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland urges a favorable report on SB 066.

# **SB 0066 - Maryland Forward Party.pdf**

Uploaded by: Philip Benenati

Position: FAV



# Maryland Forward Party

January 31, 2025

## Maryland Forward Party

PJ Benenati, Chair

(301) 606-3513

pjbenenatimdfwd@gmail.com

### **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.



# Maryland Forward Party

January 31, 2025

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

# **Quintina Brown\_SB0066 Testimony-1.pdf**

Uploaded by: Quintina Brown

Position: FAV



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY BRANCH

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*Linda Thornton-Thomas*

##### *1st Vice President*

*Michele Wiggins*

##### *2nd Vice President*

*Shelia Bryant, Esq*

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*Fai Nelson*

*Quintina Kornegay Brown*

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*Mayor Cashenna Cross*

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#### *COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR*

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*Gail Elkins, ESQ*

*Jordan Howlette, ESQ*

*Ava Richardson, Liaison*

#### **NAACP**

**Prince George's**

**County Branch 7023-B**

*9201 Basil Court*

*Suite 115*

*Upper Marlboro, Maryland*

*20774, United States*

*301-433-3900 M*

*www.princegeorgesnaacp.org*

February 3, 2025

#### **Maryland General Assembly Testimony for SB0066 – Election Law – Polling Place**

#### **Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

#### **Submitted by: Quintina Kornegay Brown on behalf of the NAACP Prince George's County Branch**

I Quintina Kornegay Brown, an executive board member of the NAACP Prince George's County Branch submits this testimony in favor of SB0066 – Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland). I reside in Clinton, Maryland and certified as an Election Judge, by the Board of Elections in Prince George's County. I have observed the following in recent National, Local Primaries and Presidential elections at Prince George's County polling sites.

Prince George's County residents are energized to exercise their power at the polls by fulfilling their constitution and civic duties on election day. At various polling sites there are long lines throughout the day. Seniors with mobility difficulties or simply the "aging process" have challenges in securing their vote. The Maryland General Assembly should afford "Seniors" the courtesy to skip the line or be granted an expedited voting process that does not require standing for extended periods of time. While many citizens graciously allow seniors to move to the beginning of the line, it is not always afforded to the elderly, and it is not the law. According to the United States Census Bureau about 42.5 million Americans have disabilities from the 2021 data that includes the elderly. (U.S. Government Accountability Office -GAO-21-352).

The alternative is a mail-in-ballot. Seniors' preference is to vote in person understandably so when there are concerns over tampering with voter drop-boxes by fire or completely stolen votes that have disappeared and not counted. The Maryland State Board of Elections has an incredibly good record for election integrity. However, voters in general take pride in casting their ballot in person.

Maryland is a progressive "State" and should follow the following States: (MT, ID, AZ, CA NE, KS, OK, TX, WI, MO, MS, CA, MI, IL, OH, WV, VA, NC, SC, VT, NH, AK and the District of Columbia) with accommodations for seniors with disabilities to expedite the in person voting process on election day at the polls.

Requesting your favorable consideration for SB0066 Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland.

Respectfully,

Quintina Kornegay Brown

# **SB66.DDCouncil.Support.PollingPlaceProcedures.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rachel London

Position: FAV



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
SB 66: Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With  
Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)

February 5, 2025

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. From this perspective, the Council supports SB 66 as a step toward making Maryland a place where everyone can participate effectively in the electoral process.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- SB 66 requires the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for an expedited voting process for older voters and voters with disabilities (the voters) that is accessible.
- The process for accessible and expedited voting will include early voting and all polling places; collect feedback from the voters to make any adjustments as needed; and include instructions for election judge training on the best practices for assisting the voters.

WHY is this legislation important?

- **Voting is a fundamental right that Maryland's citizens with developmental disabilities want and need to access.** However, people with disabilities vote at a lower rate compared to people without disabilities.
- Voting rates are largely influenced by accessibility of voting, which remains a barrier for people with disabilities. In 2022, 20% of voters with disabilities experienced difficulty with voting compared to 6% among voters without disabilities.<sup>1</sup>
- More people with disabilities vote in elections when there are expanded accessible voting options.<sup>1</sup> In the 2020 election, there was a six-point increase in voters with disabilities due to greater use of mail in voting and curbside voting due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*While investments in voting equity are without question needed, including for people with disabilities, the Council believes that the amount, purpose, and timing of such efforts must take into consideration the needs of all Marylanders with disabilities. Funding for this bill should not be offset by limiting essential funding for other critical needs, most immediately the Developmental Disabilities Administration community services that thousands of Marylanders depend upon.*

Contact: Dr. Stephanie Dolamore, Deputy Director, [sdolamore@md-council.org](mailto:sdolamore@md-council.org)

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/EAC\\_2023\\_Rutgers\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/EAC_2023_Rutgers_Report_FINAL.pdf)

# **SB 466 Elderly-Disabled Voting Statement Full Fina**

Uploaded by: Robert Doyle

Position: FAV



**Statement of the Maryland Federation of  
National Active and Retired Federal Employees  
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee Hearing,  
February 5, 2025  
On SB 466 - Election Law – Polling Place Procedures –  
Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities  
(Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland) )**

**(Position – FAV)**

To: Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members

I am pleased to provide you with this statement on behalf of the State Legislative Committee of the Maryland National and Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE), representing approximately 317,000 federal annuitants and employees in Maryland. For the continuing and benefit of all Maryland seniors and disabled persons – our members and all others -- we support and ask you for a favorable report on SB 66, Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland). We thank Senator Arthur Ellis for introducing this Bill.

Clearly, the right to vote, a foundation stone of our Democracy, is more important than ever. SB 466 will provide remarkable help in that regard.

We have no doubt that election judges and election workers at Maryland polling places have done their best to help voters who need special assistance because they are elderly or disabled. But there are still instances where someone will fall through the cracks. I saw this at an early voting polling place in Anne Arundel county last year when several older voters faced long lines without getting any opportunity to sit down to wait for the line to catch up to them, and were very discouraged, some to the point of leaving to come another day.

In thinking about and researching this Bill, I noted some unsuccessful bill in past years which would have required 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, and would also require SBE to develop and post signage at polling places identifying these methods to voters. I am not sure why these Bills did not pass.

I think SB 466 is a better path to help seniors and disabled persons make voting easier than the earlier unsuccessful bills. It will require the SBE to establish guidelines for the local boards of election to implement special procedures for elderly voters and voters with disabilities at each early voting center and polling place and requires the local boards to implement the guidelines. As important follow-up, the SBE will submit a report to the General Assembly after each election discussing any challenges to its guidelines, and a summary of feedback received by local boards on the effectiveness of the new guidelines.

When the SBE begins the work to establish these guidelines, we at MD NARFE expect and look forward to participate in whatever public rulemaking process the SBE should implement to achieve the requirements of SB 466.

We respectfully ask that you give a favorable report to SB 66.

Thank you.

Robert M. Doyle, Co-Chair  
Maryland Federation – NARFE  
State Legislative Committee  
4226 Carvel Lane  
Edgewater, MD 21037  
[bdoyle47@verizon.net](mailto:bdoyle47@verizon.net)  
H (410) 798-0079  
C/Text (301) 693-1774

# **SB66.HB781.TheArcSupport.AccessibleandExpeditedVot**

Uploaded by: Rylie Shewbridge

Position: FAV



February 5, 2025

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

RE: SB66/HB781 – Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland – Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Arc Central Chesapeake Region, we write in support of ***SB66/HB781 - Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland.***

The Arc Central Chesapeake Region serves over 4,000 children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families in Anne Arundel County and Maryland's Eastern Shore. Our mission is to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in living their chosen lives by creating opportunities, promoting respect and equity, and providing access to services.

Voting is a vital way for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience full inclusion in their communities. It empowers people to participate in shaping policies that affect their daily lives and ensures their voices are heard. SB66/HB781 would require the State Board of Elections to establish guidelines for local election boards to implement processes that accommodate and expedite voting for elderly voters and voters with disabilities. It would also mandate training and best practices for election judges.

Providing dedicated lines, clear signage, and priority seating for elderly voters and voters with disabilities will help eliminate physical and systemic barriers that still exist. Additionally, this legislation will allow these voters to provide feedback on the voting process and collaborate with the State Board of Elections to further improve accessibility. SB66/HB781 is a crucial step in supporting the state's ongoing efforts and commitment to removing barriers for elderly voters and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB66/HB781.

Sincerely,

Jonathon Rondeau  
President & CEO

[thearcccr.org](http://thearcccr.org)

Office: 410.269.1883  
Fax: 410.384.4015

# **SB66 Polling Procedures pdf.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sharon Maneki

Position: FWA

Subject: SB 66 Favorable With An Amendment

Date: February 5, 2025

From: National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

15 Charles Plaza, #3002

[President@nfbmd.org](mailto:President@nfbmd.org)

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

The National Federation of the Blind of Maryland favors the following amendment: On page 3, after line 4, insert “The elderly or disabled voter shall be given a choice of whether to use the special procedures.”

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to vote in favor of the amended SB66.

The state Board of Elections will promulgate guidelines for the local boards to use concerning special procedures for elderly and disabled voters. It is most important for these voters to be given a choice about which procedures they need or if they need any procedures. Persons who are elderly and persons who have disabilities have a variety of needs, and they are the only ones who can determine those needs. The choice must be specifically mentioned as part of the guidelines because it will not occur if it is not mentioned. These voters should be treated with respect, and their dignity should not be compromised in any way.

SB66 is a very good bill. It will encourage the elderly and disabled voters to exercise their right to vote because their needs will be recognized and met by the election officials. Please vote in favor of the amended SB66.

# **Final- SB66 - 2025.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: John Michael Gudger

Position: INFO



# Maryland Association of Election Officials

## Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

February 5, 2025

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

### SB66 - Information

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) is the professional membership organization representing local election officials and Election Boards across all 24 jurisdictions in the state. Our members are dedicated to ensuring the smooth and effective administration of elections, and we are deeply committed to making Maryland elections accessible, secure, and fair.

MAEO appreciates the intent behind Senate Bill 66 to improve voting access for elderly voters and voters with disabilities. We note that Maryland election judges already receive training on assisting voters with diverse needs, ensuring accessibility without requiring individuals to disclose personal information. We offer a program that allows anyone to choose to sit and wait for their turn to check in rather than standing in line, if they so choose. Additionally, any voter, regardless of ability or disability, has access to a Ballot Marking Device in the polling place, an accessible option and alternative to voters marking their ballots by hand.

We also wish to provide information on potential legal considerations related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Under the ADA, election workers cannot ask voters if they have a disability, and Maryland does not require voter ID, making age verification impractical. Additionally, the bill's requirement to **segregate** voters into dedicated expedited lines could raise privacy concerns or create unintended barriers if voters feel pressured to disclose a disability.

MAEO remains committed to facilitating accessible elections and appreciates the opportunity to provide information on election administration considerations related to this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.