

DRM Written FAV HB 317 Curbside Voting In Senate EE

Uploaded by: Braden Stinar

Position: FAV

SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HB 317 – Election Law – Curbside Voting – Pilot Program
Hearing 3/27 at 1:00 p.m
Position: SUPPORT

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is the designated Protection & Advocacy agency in Maryland, mandated to advance the civil rights of people with disabilities. DRM advocates for Marylanders with disabilities to fully participate in the electoral process.

DRM supports House Bill 317, which creates an opportunity for individuals with certain disabilities and older adults to cast their ballots on Election Day without having to exit their vehicles. This bill would serve to provide an accommodation for voting for those who have difficulty walking or standing . The bill requires the State Board of Elections (SBE) to establish a curbside voting pilot program in three Maryland counties. The SBE will analyze data and community feedback from these counties to assess the feasibility of expanding curbside voting statewide in future elections. By increasing accessible voting methods, this bill broadens voting opportunities for voters with disabilities and mobility challenges.

Curbside voting is not a new concept; it has been successfully implemented in numerous states as a means to promote inclusivity in elections.¹ This pilot program will provide valuable data on how curbside voting can be effectively integrated into Maryland's electoral system. Mobility impairments are the most common disability among voters with disabilities. Providing additional accommodations to ensure these individuals can physically access a polling location is essential to preventing discrimination and ensuring full participation in our democracy. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) require that voting be accessible to all individuals, yet traditional voting methods still create obstacles. By implementing curbside voting, Maryland will be taking a significant step toward eliminating these barriers and upholding the fundamental right to vote.

In addition, we would like to note that curbside voting is not a substitute for any other voting method and must not be used to shift the responsibilities of

¹ https://www.lgbtmap.org/democracy-maps/curbside_voting

the State's obligations to ensure accessible and private voting. Physical polling places must remain fully accessible to all voters, and the State should continue to explore and expand accessibility across all voting methods to accommodate the needs of people with all disabilities. Ensuring that every Marylander can vote privately, independently, and securely must remain a priority in all election policies.

Ensuring equitable access to voting is a bipartisan issue that strengthens our democracy. DRM requests a favorable report on House Bill 317. Please do not hesitate to contact me at BradenS@DisabilityRightsMD.org or 410-929-6859 with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Braden Stinar, Esq.
Attorney
Disability Rights Maryland

HB 317 Election Law Curbside Voting Pilot.FAV.AARP

Uploaded by: Charlesetta Griffin

Position: FAV



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HB 317 – Election Law: Curbside Voting Pilot Program
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
March 27, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Charlesetta Griffin, and I serve as Chair of the Legislative Committee for AARP Suitland Maryland Chapter #939. In this role, I work closely with Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy for AARP Maryland. On behalf of AARP Maryland and its local chapters, I am here to express our strong support for **HB 317 – Election Law: Curbside Voting Pilot Program**. We extend our thanks to Delegates Williams and Wilkins for sponsoring this critical piece of legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that fights for the issues that matter most to its members and all older Americans. One of our priorities is ensuring access to the ballot box for all eligible voters. AARP encourages states to provide a wide range of voting options to make it easier for citizens to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Maryland has made significant progress in expanding voting access by implementing early voting, offering vote-by-mail options, and providing convenient ballot drop-off locations. These measures have rightfully earned the state high marks. However, Maryland lags behind in one crucial area: **curbside voting**.

HB 317 addresses this gap by proposing a Curbside Voting Pilot Program, which would allow any voter to request this option while maintaining the integrity of the electoral process. Curbside voting is especially important for Marylanders with disabilities and frail older adults who face physical barriers to entering polling locations. Many seniors prefer to vote in person on Election Day and would greatly benefit from this accommodation.

Curbside voting is not a novel concept; many states and jurisdictions, including our neighbors in Virginia and the District of Columbia, have successfully implemented similar programs. HB 317 represents Maryland's opportunity to join these states in ensuring equitable access to the polls for all its citizens.

On behalf of AARP Maryland and Chapter 939, I thank the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 317. We respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, AARP Maryland Advocacy Director, at tbresnahan@aarp.org or 410-302-8451



JUD - HB 317 - Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pi

Uploaded by: Joanne Antoine

Position: FAV

March 27, 2025

Testimony on HB 317
Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland and the ACLU of Maryland support HB 317, which would establish a pilot program for curbside voting at certain polling locations over the next two election cycles during both the early voting period and on Election Day.

While Maryland is considered a national leader on voting rights, we continue to fall short when it comes to access for voters with disabilities. We continue to work on improving the process for mail-in voting which helps the voter with a disability who needs to vote remotely, but voters continue to experience issues when voting in-person. During the last three election cycles, voters and election protection volunteers reported accessibility issues: voters being unable to stand in line, voters having trouble accessing the entrance of polling locations, and even voters sharing how they had trouble walking through the parking lot to get to their voting site because of an incline or limited ADA parking. Many of these issues can be addressed through voter education that ensure voters are made aware of the assistance that is available (signage at all voting sites would assist with these efforts), but curbside voting would provide an alternative option that would significantly improve their voting experience.

Curbside voting would provide voters the opportunity to securely cast their ballot in-person outside of a voting location. Launching this new program as a pilot in jurisdictions with different populations of voters will ensure we can test and improve the program before we, hopefully, launch the curbside program as a statewide permanent method of voting during early voting and on Election Day.

Maryland would be the twenty-eighth state (plus Washington D.C.) that requires or allows curbside voting as an option. Expanding our methods of voting is a step towards greater access to democracy for all.

We urge a favorable report.

Testimony for Senate in Support of HB 317 by LDP f

Uploaded by: LaRah Payne

Position: FAV

Testimony before Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment in Support of H.B. 317: Establishing a Pilot Program for Curbside Voting

To Chairperson Feldman, Vice-Chairperson Kagan and Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment:

My name is Dr. LaRah Payne, and I am a Camp Springs resident in Prince George's County, Maryland and a member of AARP Suitland Maryland Chapter #939. Chapter 939's 400+ paid members reside in all areas of Prince George's County.

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 317 - Election Law: Curbside Voting Pilot Program. And I thank Delegates Williams and Wilkins for sponsoring this critical legislation.

HB 317 proposes the establishment of a pilot program for curbside voting in our state. Curbside voting is a critical measure that ensures all eligible voters, including those with disabilities, the elderly, and individuals with medical conditions, can cast their ballots without facing unnecessary barriers. This pilot program will allow us to test the viability of curbside voting and gather valuable data on its effectiveness and efficiency.

Opponents of curbside voting often raise some objections including concerns about voter fraud, increased costs, and logistical challenges. However, these objections are not supported by evidence, as I discuss below.

1. *Voter Fraud*: Critics often argue that curbside voting could lead to increased voter fraud. However, studies have shown that voter fraud is extremely rare, and there is no evidence to suggest that curbside voting increases the risk. In fact, states that have implemented curbside voting, such as Connecticut and New York, have not reported any significant issues with fraud.
2. *Increased Costs*: Some opponents claim that curbside voting would be too costly to implement. However, the costs associated with curbside voting are minimal compared to the benefits it provides. For example, a study by the Election Assistance Commission found that the additional costs of curbside voting are offset by the increased voter turnout and the positive impact on voter satisfaction.
3. *Logistical Challenges*: There are concerns that curbside voting could create logistical challenges for election officials. However, best practices and training programs can help address these challenges. For instance, providing clear instructions to voters and training poll workers on how to assist curbside voters can ensure a smooth and efficient process.

By implementing this pilot program, we can address the unique challenges faced by voters who may find it difficult to enter polling places - such as those with disabilities, limited mobility and the elderly. This initiative aligns with our commitment to promoting

**Testimony before Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
in Support of H.B. 317: Establishing a Pilot Program for Curbside Voting**

inclusivity and accessibility in our electoral process. It also demonstrates our dedication to upholding the fundamental right to vote for every Marylander.

I join AARP Chapter 939 in respectfully urging the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment to issue a favorable report for HB 317, and to help make curbside voting a reality in our state. This program has the potential to significantly improve voter participation and ensure particularly vulnerable individuals are not disenfranchised due to advanced age, physical limitations, or health concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. LaRah Payne
6601 Old Branch Ave
Camp Springs, MD 20748
Home Phone: 301-449-9106
Email: LDPayne@aol.com

cc:
Catherine Williamson
Acting President
AARP Suitland Maryland Chapter # 939
cjwillia@verizon.net

(SENATE) DNW HB 317 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicole Williams

Position: FAV

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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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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.

HB0317 crossover FWA - Election Law - Curbside Vot

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FWA

03/27/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB0317- POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program

TO: Chair Feldman Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support with its amendments of crossover bill HB0317, **Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program**

This bill passed the House with amendments 112-28 on 03/13/25.

The right to vote is one of the most precious rights that citizens have; the opportunity to evaluate candidates and issues and give their opinion, via that vote, to whom they wish to have as their representative in a government. This bill will permit Maryland to evaluate a system of voting that is currently used in twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia.

Curbside voting is a method of in-person voting where voters who are unable to physically enter their polling place (e.g., due to a disability) may request that a ballot be brought outside of the polling place to an accessible location such as a vehicle. ¹

The United States Election Assistance Commission has studied the issue and created a Quick Start Guide that defines what it is, how to ensure accessibility, and the best practices to use secure chain of custody processes and other safeguards to collect and process votes cast using curbside voting. ²

This bill will permit Maryland to evaluate implementation of curbside voting in the state by establishing the Curbside Voting Pilot Program testing the viability of curbside voting in the State. The bill accomplishes this goal by establishing requirements governing curbside voting. Lastly, it will require the State Board to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Pilot so that further actions might be taken to reject or implement curbside voting as a choice in Maryland. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report with its amendments on crossover bill HB#0317.**

¹ https://www.lgbtmap.org/democracy-maps/curbside_voting

2025 HB0317 Election Curbside Voting 2025-03-27.pd

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against HB0317

Honorable Senators

Please vote against HB0317.

This bill seems to be a solution in search of a problem when the State website for Access by Voters with Disabilities seems to address most of the situations described by those who testified in favor of this bill during the House debate. See (<https://www.elections.maryland.gov/voting/accessibility.html>).

Has anyone done a study showing that this service is wanted by a sufficient number of the public and if desired, can curbside voting be done in a cost effective and secure manner? If one receives a ballot by mail, prepares it, and is driven to, or takes public transportation to, a drop box, isn't that essentially "curbside" voting?

This bill does not discuss the logistics of getting the voting equipment setup outside, and the physical security needed to protect the equipment from the elements. The blind may need a ballot marking device that contains a headset and keypad or blind voters and voters with low vision could vote by listening to the ballot selections and by using the keypad. They may also choose to use the high contrast and large print functions of the voting unit. Will these features be usable while sitting in a car or van?

Testimony by the Maryland Association of Electors listed three problems with this bill, which supports my logistics concerns.

Concerns Regarding Technology Compatibility

A significant challenge we face is the lack of compatible technology to efficiently implement curbside voting. Our current ballot marking devices (BMDs) and pollbook printers, while standardized across the state, are not designed for outdoor or mobile use. Unlike the more compact, modern systems used in other states to facilitate curbside voting, our equipment requires substantial logistical adjustments and potential additional investments in new technology to function effectively in this capacity. Additionally, we may need to renegotiate our equipment leases to permit outdoor use.

Unless this bill is tied to a future procurement process that ensures the acquisition of mobile, weather-resistant ballot marking devices and pollbooks, local election officials will face significant operational hurdles. Without appropriate equipment, election staff will be forced to implement costly and inefficient workarounds, increasing the risk of delays, errors, equipment damage and security concerns. Additionally, any new technology must undergo rigorous testing and certification to ensure compliance with state and federal election security standards.

Testimony Against HB0317

Election Security, Ballot Integrity and Voter Perception of Security

The prospect of managing loose ballots outside our established zone of control presents a critical concern from an election security standpoint. Maintaining the integrity and secrecy of each vote is paramount, and the transition to curbside voting introduces new vulnerabilities that must be meticulously addressed to prevent any compromise in our electoral process. Beyond logistical challenges, voter perception of security plays a crucial role in public confidence. Any perceived weaknesses—such as ballots being marked or transferred outside a secure polling environment—could undermine trust in the system, regardless of actual security measures in place.

Weather and Space Considerations

The weather variability, particularly during primary and general election seasons, poses an additional operational challenge to curbside voting. Ensuring the safety and comfort of voters and election workers, as well as protecting voting equipment from adverse weather conditions, requires careful planning and additional resources.

To me, it would seem easier to use the "Request a mail-in ballot" process than to be driven to the one site in each of the three counties participating in the curbside voting pilot. One's ballot can be mailed or printed from SBE's website. If one has a disability and cannot mark the ballot independently, SBE offers an online tool to help voters mark their ballot. With this tool, most voters with disabilities can make selections without help. If one would like to use this online tool, one should request a mail-in ballot and check the box saying that you want to print your ballot from SBE's website

In testimony at the Ways and Means hearing, some of the disabled witnesses stated that they wanted to vote at the election sites just like everyone else. Curbside voting does not satisfy their goals because they are not voting inside like everyone else.

One possible solution could have been SB0066 and HB0781, Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities. I testified in-person for both bills. These bills offer a low tech solution in that they give priority to the elderly and disabled so they do not have to stand in line and provide seating inside, so those who have problems standing, can sit until called to move to the next voting station in the process. These bills would have allowed those disabled who testified for HB0317 to vote inside just like everyone else with minimal technical accommodations. I see from the MYMGA database that SB0066 did not appear to pass in the Senate, and HB0781 passed the House with amendments, but did not get pass its Senate hearing on March 1.

I believe the technological and logistic issues as discussed by MAEO outweigh the benefits to set up curbside voting, even in a pilot mode, so please enter an unfavorable report about HB0317

Alan Lang March 27, 2025
45 Marys Mount Road
Harwood, MD 20776
410-336-9745
Alanlang1@verizon.net

HB0317 Curbside Voting.pdf

Uploaded by: Jean Benhoff

Position: UNF

Witness: Jean Miceli Benhoff
Jurisdiction: Baltimore County
Bill: HB0317
Position: Strongly Oppose

Establishing the Curbside Voting Pilot Program to test the viability of curbside voting in the State; establishing requirements governing curbside voting; requiring the State Board and local board to communicate with voters and the general public, including signage at curbside voting locations, that curbside voting is primarily for certain voters with disabilities; and requiring the State Board to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Pilot Program by September 1, 2029.

As an established election judge in Maryland and experienced, you need to know that we as judges are trained and we make accommodations for blind, disabled, all types of ADA disabilities.

Curbside voting is ripe for fraud and abuse. Plain and simple!

We know the MD BOE has in place now many ways to accomadate those disabled and it starts with Mail in Voting with ability to have an assistant, with drop boxes too. There is absolutely no reason to set up a scenario that makes fraud so easy. Further, if one can get in their car and drive they can get into the precinct if they don't want to do mail in voting with a ballot.

Further, this is an added expense to the Maryland taxpayers. We are billions over budget and this program is simply an expense with money we do NOT have in Maryland. Taxes here are outrageous. You are chasing Marylanders out of this state one family by one!

Thank you for your consideration. Oppose!!

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Benhoff
I vote!

HB0317 Curbside Voting.pdf

Uploaded by: Jolie McShane

Position: UNF

HB0156

Unfavorable

As a Chief Election Judge, Curbside Voting is too complicated for the team to establish on Election Days. We are short staffed as is, adding this complex idea is unnecessary. There is already an option to enter the building as a disabled individual and special voting machines. Curbside Voting is a step too far.

Jolie McShane

Baltimore County Maryland

410-299-3032

HB317 Curbside Voting - Unfavorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Nelson

Position: UNF

Mary Nelson
1465 Blue Ball Rd
Elkton, MD 21921
March 25, 2025

Unfavorable vote for HB317.

It is not necessary to complicate the process of voting anymore. It will take several more Election Judges to run and some counties and precincts are already having trouble staffing the elections as it is.

People who are ill or who have disabilities can request mail-in ballots and vote without leaving their homes.

Curbside voting provides another opportunity for problems.

Please vote unfavorably for HB317.

Thank you,
Mary Nelson
Mgn136@gmail.com

DO NOT SUPPORT OF BILL20250321_11240737.pdf

Uploaded by: Tom Wieland

Position: UNF

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL:BECAUSE

THIS BILL AS WRITTEN DOES NOT WARRANT IT'S EXPENSE

Tom Wieland

2464 Symphony Lane

Gambrills, Md. 21054

HB 317_ Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Pr

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **HB 317**: Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program - Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Ways & Means Committee:

This bill's purpose is for "...Establishing the Curbside Voting Pilot Program to test the viability of curbside voting in the State; establishing requirements governing curbside voting; and requiring the State Board to report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Pilot Program by September 1, 2029..."

In an era when we all are concerned about voter fraud, this Curbside Voting Pilot Program is a terrible idea. Voting needs to be closely monitored so that no fraud occurs. This Program would work against that goal.

The body of the bill states "...A LOCAL BOARD SHALL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE FOLLOWING FACTORS WHEN DETERMINING A LOCATION FOR CURBSIDE VOTING: ACCESSIBILITY OF THE LOCATION TO HISTORICALLY DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITIES; PROXIMITY OF THE LOCATION TO DENSE CONCENTRATIONS OF VOTERS; ACCESSIBILITY OF THE LOCATION BY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION; AND MAXIMIZING VOTER PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING THROUGH THE USE OF COMMUNITY CENTERS AND PUBLIC GATHERING PLACES AS LOCATIONS FOR CURBSIDE VOTING..."

I have a few issues with these stipulations. Why is the bill targeting accessibility to "historically disenfranchised communities" only and not **all** communities? The bill does not mention any other communities. Who are these "historically disenfranchised communities"? There is no definition for this term. Also, why is the bill targeting "community centers and public gathering places" and "other appropriate buildings"? The bill also does not define these terms either. We already have voting at libraries and churches as some of the many places citizens can vote during Early Voting and on Election Day. There are many places to vote! What is the end goal of this bill? Is it to have a voting location on every corner in every city or town? Also, this bill appears to treat voting as cavalierly as a drive-thru restaurant!! Not to mention the fact that there is no place in this bill that indicates that there would be any confirmation of voter identity!! So, are we now just going to let a bunch of random people driving up to a "curbside voting location" in their vehicles vote, both during Early Voting and on Election Day, with no requirement for them to prove that they are a citizen and a registered voter?!! That screams fraud to me!!

I do not see any good outcomes for this Pilot Program, nor for the concept of “Curbside Voting”. There are too many risk factors for voting fraud!!

Please **VOTE NO** on this bill to show Marylanders that you take voting seriously and want to strengthen security measures to prevent voting fraud!!

Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother, Voter and Maryland resident

Written Testimony for HB 317_ Election Law - Curb

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

Written Testimony for **HB 317**: Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program - Please **VOTE NO** on this bill.

Dear Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

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I do not see any good outcomes for this Pilot Program, nor for the concept of “Curbside Voting”. There are too many risk factors for voting fraud!!

Please **VOTE NO** on this bill to show Marylanders that you take voting seriously and want to strengthen security measures to prevent voting fraud!!

Thank you.

Trudy Tibbals

A Very Concerned Mother, Voter and Maryland resident