

Testimony in Support of H.B. 317: Establishing a Pilot Program for Curbside Voting To Chairperson Atterbeary and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

My name is Dr. LaRah Payne. 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. This initiative aligns with our commitment to promoting inclusivity and accessibility in our electoral process. It also demonstrates our dedication to upholding the fundamental right to vote for every Marylander.

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I urge the House Ways and Means Committee 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 that no one is disenfranchised due to physical limitations or health concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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