



Empowering People to Lead Systemic Change

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**WAYS AND MEANS
FEBRUARY 24, 2025
House Bill 1044 - Maryland Voting Rights Act of 2025 –
Preclearance and Voter Intimidation and Obstruction
POSITION: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is Maryland’s designated protection and advocacy organization, dedicated to advancing the rights of Marylanders with disabilities. DRM submits this testimony in support of House Bill 1044, the Maryland Voting Rights Act of 2025, Preclearance and Voter Intimidation and Obstruction.

HB 1044 requires the Attorney General or Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County to review policies that impact the vote of Marylanders to grant preclearance before their enactment. It also creates accountability for this new review process by allowing people to file an action if there is a failure to carry out the new review policies. The bill also includes prohibitions against voter intimidation and obstruction, even if the actions that result in intimidation or obstruction are technically legal or part of law enforcement.

The bill includes a process that allows members of the public, organizations, and the Attorney General to pursue complaints. The preclearance process is intended to address the impact of new voting policies on protected groups, which could prevent policies that might disproportionately affect voters with disabilities, such as changes to polling place accessibility, or vote-by-mail processes. This can be understood to include people with disabilities and voting access. Further, the bill also explicitly prohibits voter intimidation and obstruction, which can be crucial for people with disabilities who may face barriers at polling places, such as lack of assistance or coercion when casting their vote.

Strengthening the protections for people to vote free of intimidation, as well as increasing scrutiny on new voting policies serves to strengthen voting practices at the state level.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 1044. Please do not hesitate to contact me at GillianJ@DisabilityRightsMD.org or by phone at 443-692-2498.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gillian Justice
Community Engagement
Coordinator
Disability Rights Maryland