



HB 317 Election Law – Curbside Voting – Pilot Program

Testimony of Maryland Centers for Independent Living

Support - Favorable

House Ways & Means Committee, February 4, 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 Maryland Independent Living Network is in support of HB 317.

The Curbside Voting Pilot Program would test the viability of curbside voting in Maryland.

People with disabilities would greatly benefit from a pilot program like this one. People with disabilities face discrimination and barriers on a daily basis. Although there are systems in place to allow people with disabilities to access facilities, businesses and public places independently, there are still many aspects of the community that are inaccessible for our consumers.

People with disabilities exercising their right to vote, a basic right for every citizen of the United States, continue to face barriers to exercising that basic right. People with disabilities often face physical barriers by not being able to access buildings. In some cases, people with disabilities have faced barriers by the people entrusted to help voters through the voting process. People with disabilities encounter harassment or excessive questioning which can put a lot of pressure and anxiety on a person who is already dealing with their disability.

HB 317, if enacted, would allow people with disabilities to vote independently in the three counties selected by the Maryland Board of Elections while removing pressure by giving them the time and space they need to complete the voting process.

We appreciate the consideration of these comments.

The Maryland Independent Living Network strongly **supports** HB 317 and requests a favorable vote.

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