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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0781- POSITION: FAVORABLE

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

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means 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 of HB#/0781, **Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)**

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 acknowledge that elderly and disabled individuals have problems when they decide to appear in person for voting and suggests that problem needs to be addressed.

This bill initiates the process by 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. Further, it will mandate data be collected to evaluate the actions taken in this regard by 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.

The State Board of Elections has declared “Maryland is committed to making voting accessible to all voters”. This bill places policies and controls in place to ensure that commitment is working.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0781.