

February 4, 2025

**Testimony on HB 317
Election Law - Curbside Voting - Pilot Program
Ways & Means 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.