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**SB 73 Election Law – Polling Place Procedures –
Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities
(Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 11, 2026
FAVORABLE**

Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Sara Westrick, Advocacy Director for AARP Maryland, and I am representing more than 850,000 AARP members across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of SB 73, and we thank Senator Ellis for introducing this important legislation.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people to live their best lives as they age. Our work focuses on issues that matter most to older adults and their families, including affordable utilities, financial security, health care access, protection from financial exploitation, and fostering voter engagement.

This bill takes meaningful steps to ensure that Marylanders age 65 and older can vote safely, comfortably, and with dignity. Our state's population is aging, and millions of residents over 65 rely on in-person voting to participate in our democracy. For many of these voters, long lines, extended wait times, standing for long periods, and crowded environments can be physically difficult or even dangerous. Current accommodations vary by polling place and are not applied consistently statewide, resulting in unpredictable experiences that discourage participation.

The bill requires the State Board of Elections to issue uniform guidelines for accommodating older voters at every early voting center and polling place. This means older voters will not have to guess which locations are prepared to support them. In addition, by establishing expedited lines and providing seating for older voters, the bill directly addresses long wait times that can lead to fatigue and health risks.

We believe that voting must be accessible to every Marylander, including those who have spent a lifetime contributing to our state and communities. SB 73 reduces barriers, improves safety, and honors the dignity of older Marylanders.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 73.

If you have any questions, please contact Sara Westrick, AARP Maryland Advocacy Director at swestrick@aarp.org or by calling 410-310-0374.

