

Testimony in support of SB 0073

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 0073: Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters with Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland.

The right of all citizens to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy. Article 1 of our US Constitution gives states the responsibility for overseeing federal elections. Amendments to our United States Constitution, specifically the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> specify the rights of all citizens to vote.

**Article I of the Maryland Constitution**... states that “every U.S. citizen, 18 or older, who is a resident, is entitled to vote. This is reinforced by the Declaration of Rights, Article 7, which affirms that elections must be free and frequent, ensuring the right of suffrage to qualified citizens.”

While all Maryland citizens have the right to vote, being able to exercise that right may be more difficult for people who are elderly or disabled. This bill requires Maryland to take actions to ensure voting access for these people.

I care about this issue because I am 79; my husband is 83. While we have always been able to vote in Maryland elections since we moved here in the early 1970's, our mobility is now somewhat impaired. We need reassurance that we will not encounter unnecessary obstacles to voting in this year's primaries and the 2026 mid-term elections.

In addition, we have a son, now 47, with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Like all other Maryland citizens, he has a right to vote. Issues arise every day that impact his health and well-being, now and in the future. For example, Governor Moore's budget proposal for FY27 cuts 155.5 million dollars from the budget for the Developmental Disabilities Administration, the agency which oversees and funds services for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Because this is Medicaid money, there is a federal match. If Maryland cuts \$155.5 million from DDA, they actually lose \$311 million. No agency can absorb that kind of budget cut without cutting services for the 20,000 Maryland citizens who depend upon them.

Finally, our elections are now at risk by the Trump administration's call to “nationalize” state elections and other threats to suppress voting rights. Trump supporter Steve Bannon has stated that: “We're going to have ICE surround the polls come November. We're not going to sit here and allow you to steal the country again,” Bannon said Tuesday on his podcast. “And you can whine and cry and throw your toys out of the pram all you want, but we will never again allow an election to be stolen.” All of these threats to voting rights are based on unproven assertions of voter fraud. Many studies have documented that voter fraud is extremely rare.

While such threats may not come to pass, those who manage our elections need to be prepared to enforce the rights of every citizen to vote, especially those who are elderly or

disabled. Election workers will need the training required by the bill to ensure that elections in Maryland remain free and fair as they have always been.

Please support Senate Bill 0073.