



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SB 580 – State Government - Walk-In Service Requirements – Letter of Concern

Dear Chair Feldman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of concern for Senate Bill (SB) 580 – State Government - Walk-In Service Requirements. This bill seeks to require certain State divisions and programs to provide walk-in services to the public on a first-come, first-served basis at a reasonable frequency and at reasonable locations. The Department’s Division of Vital Records (DVR) is one of the state divisions named in the bill.

While the Department appreciates the goal of increasing public access to state services, we wish to highlight several significant operational challenges that would hinder the DVR ability to implement a walk-in model effectively. Our primary concerns include:

- **Infrastructure and Space Constraints:** The current DVR facility was not designed for high-volume walk-in traffic, and the lobby space is insufficient to safely or comfortably accommodate first-come, first-served crowds.
- **Operational Predictability:** The current appointment system allows DVR to manage staffing based on known demand. Moving to a walk-in model would likely lead to unpredictable surges, resulting in extended wait times and a diminished experience for Maryland residents.
- **Fiscal Impact:** In order to comply with this requirement, the Department would need to move to a new facility and hire enough staff to accommodate a walk-in service model. The estimated cost to move to a new location is \$3 million for the first year.

Prior to moving to an appointment-based service model in 2020, approximately 500 constituents came to DVR to be serviced on a daily basis. This volume was overwhelming to staff and also led to long wait times for constituents. In some instances, constituents had to wait outside due to the lobby being at its maximum capacity. Since moving to the appointment-based model, DVR staff have been able to serve constituents in a more efficient and timely manner, and constituents are not asked to wait outside due to the lobby area being full.

In order to provide other locations for constituents to obtain vital records, the Department partnered with Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) sites to allow them to issue birth and death certificates. This expansion reduced the burden at the DVR office and gave constituents other options within Baltimore City and Baltimore County that can be utilized to obtain their vital records. Additionally, Local Health Departments in all jurisdictions except Baltimore City and Baltimore County issue vital records.

For the reasons mentioned above, the Department respectfully opposes SB 580. The Department is committed to serving the public efficiently and would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we might balance accessibility with these practical constraints.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs at meghan.lynch@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D
Secretary of Health