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Bill # SB0073: Election Law - Polling Place Procedures - Voting by Elderly Voters and Voters With Disabilities (Accessible and Expedited Voting Act of Maryland)

Position: Support

Greetings Senate Committee Chair and Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

My name is Kristian McElroy. I am a Maryland Howard County resident writing to provide testimony in support of Bill# SB0073.

As a voter with multiple disabilities, I first registered in 2002 during my senior year of high school. Despite this, I did not exercise my right to vote in a presidential election until 2012, and in a state election until 2022.

The barriers to voting were significant and deeply frustrating. My local polling sites at the time lacked basic accessibility features like seating and clear directions, making it nearly impossible for me to navigate the long lines. Furthermore, I struggled with the computer voting booths due to my physical disability, and there was a lack of support for using my alternative communication device.

My ability to find an accessible voting location was entirely dependent on my specific access needs for that day and the level of training and preparation of the polling staff. These experiences were devastating, preventing me from exercising a fundamental right that I saw my community members engaging in—a right my grandmother and ancestors fought to secure.

It is with this testimony and because ensuring all voting locations, policies, and procedures are accessible to everyone, including voters with disabilities and elderly voters is a civil right - I ask you to vote “yes” on SB0073.

Sincerely,

Kristian McElroy