

**DRM Written Testimony FAV SB 100 Bus Stops GJ.pdf**

Uploaded by: Gillian Justice

Position: FAV



**Empowering People to Lead Systemic Change**

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DisabilityRightsMD.org

**SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
SB 100 Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus Stops  
February 11, 2026  
POSITION: SUPPORT**

Disability Rights Maryland (DRM, formerly Maryland Disability Law Center) is the Protection & Advocacy agency of Maryland, charged with defending and advancing the rights of people with disabilities. DRM submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 100.

DRM supports SB 100. This bill improves access to early voting centers by requiring local fixed-route buses to stop at or near early voting sites, making it easier for voters to reach polls using public transportation. Many voters with disabilities rely on local transit for daily activities. By allowing passengers on local buses to board and disembark at or near the entrance of early voting centers, the bill expands accessible travel options and strengthens electoral participation for people with disabilities.

While DRM supports this bill, we note that it is unclear as to the impact on paratransit riders. Paratransit is federally required under the Americans with Disabilities Act to operate within three-quarters of a mile of fixed-route service. Accordingly, this bill should ensure that paratransit riders are able to also board and disembark at the entrances of early voting centers. All benefits extended to fixed-route riders in this bill should be made available to paratransit riders.

Overall, this measure directly reduces transportation barriers for people with disabilities, making voting more accessible and enabling fuller participation in the democratic process.

**For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 100.** Please do not hesitate to contact me at [GillianJ@DisabilityRightsMD.org](mailto:GillianJ@DisabilityRightsMD.org) or by phone at 443-692-2498.

# **SB 100 - Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus**

Uploaded by: Ihemanma Ugo-Akwada

Position: FAV

**February 9, 2026**

**Testimony on SB 100**  
**Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus Stops**  
**Government, Labor, and Elections**

**Petition:** Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in favor of SB 100, which would require county buses with a route located within one-half mile of an Early Voting Center entrance to allow passengers to embark and disembark there.

Early voting was established to drive participation and make voting more convenient. While the program has been a continual success and we've seen hundreds of thousands of Marylanders choose to vote early since it was established, the lack of access to reliable transportation remains a strong barrier to voting. This legislation would provide individuals who use public transit easy access to early voting sites, helping to alleviate the barrier of transportation for many voters.

We appreciate the State Board of Elections taking this step to ensure that Early Voting Centers are as accessible as possible to all voters. We encourage SBE to advertise this program so the public knows additional transportation support will be available, including advertisements inside the buses themselves and in all other places promotional materials are shared. In the future, we also hope the legislature will consider making bus trips to Early Vote Centers free of cost to the voter.

We should be doing everything we can to remove barriers to exercising the right to vote. SB 100 would help to do that by ensuring all voters are provided with better access to early voting sites. For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 100.

# **SBE Testimony SB 100.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jared DeMarinis

Position: FAV



**Jared DeMarinis**  
State Administrator

**Katherine Berry**  
Deputy Administrator

**Michael Summers**, Chairman  
**Jim Shalleck**, Vice Chairman  
**Diane Butler**  
**Victoria Jackson-Stanley**  
**Eric Bryant**

**SB 100 - Chair, Government, Labor and Elections Committee (By Request –  
Departmental – State Board of Elections)  
Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops**

Purposes:

- Expand access to early voting locations
- Potentially increase voter turnout, especially among residents who face the barriers of limited mobility and transportation options

Comments:

The State Board of Elections supports this legislation.

This bill would require public bus routes funded by counties and municipalities to stop at early voting locations within half a mile of their fixed routes, to the extent feasible. There are 16 total days of early voting in each even-numbered year during which this provision would apply. MTA- and WMATA-operated routes, and express and commuter buses, are exempted.

This legislation will help facilitate civic participation. Early voting is popular among Maryland voters, and use of early voting sites has been growing in recent election cycles. Almost 990,000 Marylanders cast a ballot at an early voting center in 2024. One reason for their popularity is that early voting sites are vote centers that serve any voter in the county, and are not precinct specific. Public transportation services the county population and are a key factor in site selection of an early voting center. However, early voting centers cannot be placed precisely at the bus stops. Therefore, while we attempt to accommodate voters with public transportation access, voters may still need to walk to the early voting center. This could have a negative impact on individuals with disabilities, people with small children, or the elderly. By having the bus route stop directly in front of the early voting center with a minimum deviation of the fixed route, we are ensuring maximum participation for those sites.

An individual who wants to cast an in-person ballot should not be potentially disenfranchised due to a limitation of public transit.

Contacts:

Jared DeMarinis, State Administrator of Elections  
410-269-2853, [jared.demarinis@maryland.gov](mailto:jared.demarinis@maryland.gov)

Erin Hustings, Legislative Liaison and Voter Registration Administrator  
410-269-2867, [erin.hustings@maryland.gov](mailto:erin.hustings@maryland.gov)

JARED DeMARINIS, STATE ADMINISTRATOR  
STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

EEE 2/11/2026

# **NASW Maryland - 2026 SB 100 FAV - Early Voting Cen**

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV



**Testimony before the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 11, 2026**

**Senate Bill 100 - Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops**

**SUPPORT**

On behalf of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) Committee on Aging, we would like to express our support for Senate Bill 100 - Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops.

As social workers who serve older adults, we are in favor of this bill because it would provide an alternative for older adults to get to their polling place safely during the early voting period. Senate Bill 100 would require buses operating on a certain fixed local route to allow passengers to embark and disembark at the entrance of early voting centers located within a certain distance of the route. This would apply to transportation funded and operated by a county or municipal corporation.

Senate Bill 100 would also require State and Local Boards of Elections to inform the public about early voting and the location of early voting centers, which would include a series of public service media announcements, mailings to all registered voters and other measures as appropriate.

Older adults historically turn out to vote in greater numbers than any other age group. Early voting has become popular with older adults as it allows for flexibility in casting their vote. Mail-in voting has also expanded voting options, but older adults often feel strongly about voting in person if they are able.

Transportation to polling places can be a problem for older adults who no longer drive. Using a local bus is one way many older adults already get to appointments and shopping. Passing Senate Bill 100 would allow older adults to embark and disembark at the door of the early voting center or as close as safely possible.

Many communities work hard to be sure everyone who plans on voting can get to their polling places. That generally works well on election day. Early voting takes place on many more days, which makes those transportation options less available. Senate Bill 100 will give older adults and those who rely on public transportation, a safe entry to their voting site and will continue to promote early voting as a voting option.

We ask for your favorable report on Senate Bill 100.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW  
Executive Director, NASW-MD

# **Testimony in support of SB0100 - Election Law - Ea**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0100\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/11/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON SB#/0100- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0100, **Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops**

The Fair Elections Center has documented *How Ease of Access to Polling Locations Impacts Participation in Elections*<sup>1</sup>

...along with voter ID laws or registration deadlines, the physical location of polling places plays a major role in how accessible voting really is. These locations are not random. They are often chosen based on statutory requirements, as well as infrastructure limitations, and logistical considerations. These choices about polling place locations can help or hurt voter participation.

For many voters, especially college students, low-income families, and people living in rural areas, access to a polling place can make the difference between voting and not voting. If someone does not have a car, lives far from their assigned polling place, or lacks access to public transportation, casting a ballot in person can become a real challenge.

As noted by the Federal Transit Administration<sup>2</sup>

*Transit Programs Increase Access to Voting* Public transportation plays an important role connecting millions of Americans to jobs, vital services, and civic participation, including voting. Transit providers across the country are distinctly positioned to reduce some of the obstacles Americans face to exercising their sacred, fundamental right to vote.

This bill will help Marylanders access voting locations in response to the problem by requiring buses operating on fixed local routes funded by a county or municipal corporation and operated by a county or municipal corporation or a contractor for a county or municipal corporation to allow passengers to embark and disembark at the entrance of early voting centers located within one-half mile of the route.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0100.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fairelectionscenter.org/media/polling-locations-blog/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.transit.dot.gov/funding/grants/transit-programs-increase-access-voting>

**POGMD\_SB100\_Testimony\_Feb\_11\_2026.pdf**

Uploaded by: Mat Rice

Position: FWA



## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 100**

### **Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus Stops**

Hearing Date: February 11, 2026

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Sponsor: Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee (By Request – Departmental – State Board of Elections)

Cross-file: HB 263

position: Support with Amendment

Mat Rice, Executive Director, submits this testimony on behalf of People On The Go Maryland (POG), Maryland’s statewide self advocacy and systems advocacy organization run for and by people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. POG supports SB 100 because transportation is a practical barrier to voting for many Marylanders, and this bill takes a clear step to make early voting centers easier to reach. POG respectfully requests a favorable report.

### **Why SB 100 matters**

Early voting is only accessible when people can get to the early voting center safely and on time. For people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, transportation can be the difference between voting and not voting. Many people do not drive and rely on public transportation, paratransit, family, or support staff to travel.

SB 100 requires buses operating on certain fixed local routes to allow passengers to embark and disembark at the entrance of an early voting center when the center is within one-half mile of the route, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with accessibility requirements. This helps reduce long walks, confusing wayfinding, and safety concerns—especially for voters who may need predictable, clearly marked access points.

## **Friendly amendment to include statewide paratransit-type systems**

POG respectfully offers a friendly amendment to make sure the bill's goal applies to people who rely on statewide paratransit-type systems, not only fixed-route local buses. Many eligible riders use demand-response or complementary paratransit service rather than a fixed-route bus. Including these services would better reflect how many voters with disabilities actually travel to polling locations across Maryland.

Proposed friendly amendment concept (plain language):

- When an early voting center is served by a publicly funded paratransit or demand-response program, the provider should, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with accessibility and safety requirements, allow riders to be dropped off and picked up at the entrance of the early voting center on early voting days.

Proposed friendly amendment language (draft, for consideration):

- Amend Election Law §10–301.1(e) to apply not only to certain county/municipal fixed local routes, but also to publicly funded paratransit/demand-response services. For example, revise subsection (e)(1)(i) to include additional covered services such as:

“(I) This subsection applies with respect to a fixed-route public bus service funded or operated by the State, a county, or a municipal corporation (or a contractor); and

(II) This subsection also applies with respect to a publicly funded paratransit, demand-response, or complementary paratransit service that provides transportation to members of the public, including riders with disabilities.”

Then revise subsection (e)(2) to clarify that the requirement includes allowing riders to embark/disembark (fixed-route) or be picked up/dropped off (paratransit) at the entrance of the early voting center, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with accessibility requirements.

POG offers this friendly amendment in the spirit of SB 100's purpose: improving practical access to early voting for more Maryland voters.

## **About People On The Go Maryland**

People On The Go Maryland is a statewide self advocacy and systems advocacy organization run for and by people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. We work to expand self-determination and full community participation, including the right to vote.

## **Conclusion**

SB 100 promotes practical access to early voting centers by addressing a real transportation barrier. With a friendly amendment to include statewide paratransit-type systems, the bill's benefits could reach more voters who rely on accessible transportation. POG respectfully requests a favorable report. Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Contact Information**

Mat Rice, Executive Director

People On The Go Maryland

Phone: 410-925-5706

Email: [mat@pogmd.org](mailto:mat@pogmd.org)

# **HB 263\_SB 100\_ Election Law - Early Voting Center**

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

**HB 263/SB 100**: Election Law - **Early Voting Centers - Bus Stops**: Please vote **NO** on this bill.

Dear Government, Labor & Elections Committee:

I am writing to respectfully **oppose HB 263/SB 100**, the proposal to require buses on fixed local routes to allow passengers to embark and disembark at the entrance of early voting centers located within one-half mile of the route.

While expanding access to the ballot box is an important goal, this bill raises serious concerns regarding election integrity, voter safety, and the neutrality of the voting process. First, it imposes new operational requirements on local transit systems that could disrupt existing schedules, increase costs, and create logistical challenges without clear evidence that the change will materially increase voter turnout. Mandating stops at designated locations near voting centers effectively alters routing and scheduling decisions that are traditionally made by local transit authorities. It also raises safety and accessibility concerns—particularly for elderly voters, individuals with disabilities, and families with children. Mandating bus stops directly at or near voting centers risks creating congestion, confusion, and increased difficulty maintaining secure perimeters—particularly during high-turnout periods. Election officials should be able to manage voting locations without external operational mandates that complicate security planning.

Second, Maryland already provides early voting centers during extended hours and multiple locations to facilitate voter participation. Voters who wish to use public transportation to reach polling places can generally plan their travel using existing fixed routes or seek other accommodations provided by local jurisdictions. Imposing a statewide bus-stop requirement could lead to confusion and unintended consequences for riders who rely on consistent transit service for work, school, and daily life.

Lastly, the focus of election-law reforms should remain on measures that strengthen ballot security, ensure accurate and transparent results, and promote confidence in the electoral process. Requiring transit systems to adjust their operations around voting center locations is a well-intentioned but ultimately impractical mandate that burdens local government services.

Protecting the integrity, dignity and security of the voting process is essential to a healthy democracy. For these reasons, I urge you to oppose **HB 263/SB 100**.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 263/SB 100**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Trudy Tibbals