

**TESTIMONY FOR HB0219: Maryland Voting Rights Act of 2026 - Voter Intimidation and Suppression**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Smith

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

**February 9, 2026**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

My name is Tatiana Santos and I am a resident of Frederick, MD. I'm submitting this testimony in favor of HB0219.

I urge the Committee to pass HB0219 to enact protections against voter intimidation and suppression in Maryland. HB0219 is an emergency bill that strengthens Maryland's commitment to protecting the fundamental right to vote. It prohibits acts of intimidation, deception, or obstruction that interfere with a person's ability to cast a ballot. The bill also prevents local governments from adopting or enforcing any election-related policy that results in disparities between members of a protected class and other voters. In particular, we have several documented instances of voter intimidation at the polls in Frederick, MD in our last election season. We had candidates who campaigned at polling stations and supporters who taunted voters in line to cast their vote. I only expect that 2026 will bring increased violations and intimidation tactics.

At this time in America, these protections are fundamentally necessary. Voter intimidation and misinformation have become increasingly prevalent and sophisticated. Even less-obvious forms of obstruction can discourage participation, especially among communities that have historically faced barriers to the ballot box. HB0219 ensures that Maryland has clear, enforceable standards to ensure full access to the ballot and to hold accountable those who attempt to undermine the voting process.

By prohibiting intimidation and deceptive practices, HB0219 strengthens the integrity of our elections and protects the rights of voters who are most vulnerable to suppression. It reinforces the values of equity and civic empowerment, and helps build a healthier, more inclusive democracy for all Marylanders. I urge that you support HB0219 and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.