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To: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

The members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland strongly urge the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to give an unfavorable report to HB0964,, styled by its proponents as the Secure the Vote Act of 2026. This bill would repeal various statutes designed to make it easier for Maryland voters to access the franchise and implement new so-called voting security measures that would, in the aggregate, make it more difficult for Marylanders who are blind or who have other disabilities to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

This bill is problematic for many reasons, so we have limited this testimony only to the most obvious and troubling. Most egregiously, the bill eliminates the permanent absentee-voter system that many blind and disabled voters currently rely on to automatically receive accessible ballots that they can at least mark privately and independently and would instead require these voters to apply for an absentee ballot in each election where they want to use one. It further requires “wet” signatures on absentee ballot applications and ballots themselves, requiring blind voters to expose their applications and ballots to others in order to get help applying the signature. While the bill allows voters with “physical” disabilities to apply for absentee ballots, the use of the word “physical” excludes many voters with print disabilities whose inability to read and mark a printed ballot is unrelated to an obvious physical disability. This means, for example, that voters with dyslexia or cortical blindness would not be eligible to apply for an absentee ballot. Furthermore, the bill imposes government-issued photo ID and accompanying documentation requirements for registration and in-person voting, which we are already on record opposing because of the difficulty blind voters have in acquiring the documentation needed and obtaining transportation to cites where they can acquire the required photo ID.

For these reasons and many others, we ask for an unfavorable report on HB0964. For questions, please contact me at [President@nfbmd.org](mailto:President@nfbmd.org) or at 443-426-4110.

