



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF HB 462

Elections – In-Person Voting – Proof of Identity

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

February 11, 2026

Voting Member Agencies:

Anne Arundel County Food Bank

Baltimore Jewish Council

CASH Campaign of Maryland

Catholic Charities

Family League of Baltimore

Laurel Advocacy & Referral Services,
Inc.

Maryland Center on Economic Policy

Maryland Family Network

Maryland Food Bank

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Poverty Free Maryland

Poverty Free Maryland strongly opposes HB 462, which would require individuals voting in person to prove their identity by presenting a valid government-issued photo identification or a valid nongovernment-issued photo identification and one government document with their name and address.

HB 462 is unnecessary. HB 462 is a solution to a non-existent problem. The most comprehensive national study on instances of voter fraud found there were only 2,068 alleged election fraud cases since 2000 – and only ten of these cases were in-person voter fraud. The majority of the fraud cases were related to absentee ballots and registration errors – things that would not be addressed by voter ID laws. Of the 2,068 cases, only two of the alleged cases were in Maryland and neither was in-person voter fraud.¹

HB 462 will disproportionately affect communities of color, women, and seniors. A study out of Harvard and Tufts Universities found that Black voters are still more likely to lack adequate identification to vote under voter ID laws, concluding these laws clearly create a racial disparity in voting rights.² This complements the study conducted by the Brennan Center which found that 11% of voting-age United States citizens do not have current and valid photo ID and that the percentage was even higher for low-income individuals (15%), minorities (25%), and the elderly (18%).³ Another recent study conducted after the proliferation of voter ID laws in other states demonstrated that voter ID laws depressed Latine turnout by 9.3 points, Black and African American turnout by 8.6 points, and Asian American turnout by 12.5 points.⁴ To quote the study, “We find that voter identification laws do, in fact, substantially alter the makeup of who votes and ultimately do skew democracy in favor of whites [...] Voter ID laws may represent one of the Nation’s most important civil rights issues.”⁵

HB 462 will disenfranchise individuals struggling with housing instability. Keeping personal identification safe and secure without stable housing is nearly impossible; people often become the victims of theft or their documents deteriorate when exposed to the elements. Institutions such as hospitals, jails, and shelters often discard an individual’s belongings – including identifying documentation. Often, a person fleeing intimate partner violence may not be able to retrieve important documents. Although HB 462 does allow

*Founded in 2025 through the merger of Welfare Advocates (established in 1979) and Marylanders Against Poverty (established in 1988), **Poverty Free Maryland** is a coalition of service providers, faith groups, and other organizations working together to exchange information, educate decisionmakers, and advocate for statewide public policies and programs necessary to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty and ensure that low-income Marylanders are provided with low- and no-barrier access to all resources needed to thrive and build a better life for the future.*

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for government documents and bank statements to help count as identification, individuals who experience homelessness do not often have an address where such mail can be delivered and accessed reliably. Ultimately, HB 462 would create significant barriers to voting - especially for the most vulnerable Marylanders.

HB 462 is costly. To inform voters of the changes in required documentation needed to vote, past fiscal notes indicate it would cost upwards of \$500,000 just for voter outreach for one year. That does not include the additional provisional ballots that would need to be printed, or the need to hire additional election judges to properly implement the voter identification requirement in populated jurisdictions. Moreover, most states with voter ID laws face expensive legal challenges, and through litigation, several state laws have been overturned.⁶ As Maryland grapples with a large structural deficit, inserting an expensive new voting requirement - when no widespread in-person voter fraud exists - is a grossly inefficient use of state resources.

HB 462 creates an excessive – and unwarranted – barrier to the constitutional right to vote. Marylanders living in or near poverty are already economically disenfranchised, and HB 462 will generate voter disenfranchisement for Marylanders who lack proper identification and the means to obtain the required documentation for voting. The right to vote is central to our democracy; therefore, it must be protected. Any initiative that might disenfranchise eligible voters must meet the highest burden of proof. This bill cannot meet that burden.

Poverty Free Maryland appreciates your consideration and requests the committee provide an unfavorable report on HB 462.

Poverty Free Maryland envisions a Maryland without poverty, and a future where all Marylanders have the support and economic stability that's needed to thrive.

¹ Khan & Carson. (2012). Comprehensive Database of U.S. Voter Fraud Uncovers No Evidence That Photo Id Is Needed. "Who Can Vote? Project." News21. Retrieved from <http://votingrights.news21.com/article/election-fraud/>

² *A Dead Simple Algorithm Reveals the True Toll of Voter ID Laws.* January 2018. <https://www.wired.com/story/voter-id-law-algorithm/>

³ Brennan Center for Justice. (2006). "Citizens Without Proof". Retrieved from <http://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/citizens-without-proof>

⁴ Hajnal, Z., Lajevardi, N., and Nielson, L. (2016). *Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes.* University of California at San Diego. <http://pages.ucsd.edu/~zhajnal/page5/documents/voterIDhajnaletal.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures. (2014, May). *Voter ID in the Courts: An Introduction to legal challenges to voter ID laws.* http://www.ncsl.org/documents/legismgt/elect/Voter_ID_Courts_May2014.pdf