

HOUSE BILL 493

G1

1lr1338

By: **Delegate Guyton**

Introduced and read first time: January 15, 2021

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Voting Locations – Accessibility by Public Transportation and**
3 **Voters With Disabilities**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring, in counties that have fixed–route public transportation
5 services, the local boards of elections to give priority to placing ballot drop boxes at
6 locations that are not more than a certain distance from a public transportation
7 station or stop and designating polling places located not more than a certain
8 distance from a public transportation station or stop; requiring ballot drop boxes to
9 be placed in a manner that is accessible to voters with disabilities; requiring the
10 State Board of Elections, in counties that have fixed–route public transportation
11 services and in collaboration with certain local boards, to give priority to designating
12 early voting centers that are located not more than a certain distance from a public
13 transportation station or stop; defining a certain term; and generally relating to
14 accessibility of voting locations.

15 BY adding to

16 Article – Election Law

17 Section 9–310.1

18 Annotated Code of Maryland

19 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

20 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

21 Article – Election Law

22 Section 10–101(a)(1) and 10–301.1(c)

23 Annotated Code of Maryland

24 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

25 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
26 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

27 **Article – Election Law**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 **9-310.1.**

2 (A) IN THIS SECTION, "BALLOT DROP BOX" MEANS A SECURE, DURABLE,
3 OUTDOOR CONTAINER THAT IS OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED BY A LOCAL BOARD
4 EXCLUSIVELY FOR VOTERS TO DEPOSIT COMPLETED ABSENTEE BALLOTS IN
5 PERSON.

6 (B) IN A COUNTY THAT HAS FIXED-ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
7 SERVICE, A LOCAL BOARD SHALL GIVE PRIORITY TO PLACING BALLOT DROP BOXES
8 AT LOCATIONS THAT ARE NOT MORE THAN 500 FEET FROM A PUBLIC
9 TRANSPORTATION STATION OR STOP.

10 (C) EACH BALLOT DROP BOX SHALL BE PLACED IN A MANNER THAT IS
11 ACCESSIBLE TO VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING VOTERS USING
12 WHEELCHAIRS.

13 10-101.

14 (a) (1) (I) Each local board shall designate a polling place that meets the
15 requirements of this subsection for each precinct in the county as established by the local
16 board in accordance with Title 2 of this article.

17 (II) IN A COUNTY THAT HAS FIXED-ROUTE PUBLIC
18 TRANSPORTATION SERVICE, A LOCAL BOARD SHALL GIVE PRIORITY TO
19 DESIGNATING POLLING PLACES THAT ARE LOCATED NOT MORE THAN 500 FEET
20 FROM A PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STATION OR STOP.

21 10-301.1.

22 (c) (1) No later than 6 months before a primary election, the State Board, in
23 collaboration with the local board in each county, shall designate each early voting center
24 in that county.

25 (2) IN A COUNTY THAT HAS FIXED-ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
26 SERVICE, THE STATE BOARD, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE LOCAL BOARD, SHALL
27 GIVE PRIORITY TO DESIGNATING EARLY VOTING CENTERS THAT ARE LOCATED NOT
28 MORE THAN 500 FEET FROM A PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STATION OR STOP.

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
30 October 1, 2021.