

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 557

(Senator Augustine)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Ways and Means

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Election Law – Polling Place Procedures – Individual Assisting a Voter

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This bill prohibits an individual assisting a voter in marking or preparing a ballot at a polling place or early voting center from (1) assisting more than three voters who are unrelated to the individual in marking or preparing a ballot unless the individual is an election judge or (2) receiving compensation for assisting a voter in marking or preparing the ballot. **The bill takes effect January 1, 2025.**

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** The bill is not expected to materially affect local government finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Under State law, a voter who requires assistance in marking or preparing a ballot at a polling place or early voting center because of a physical disability or an inability to read the English language may choose any individual to assist them, with the exception of their employer or agent of their employer or an officer or agent of their union. If the voter requires assistance but declines to select an individual to assist, an election judge, in the presence of another election judge that represents another political party, must assist the voter in the manner prescribed by the voter.

An individual assisting a voter may not suggest in any way how the voter should vote for a particular ticket, candidate, or position on a question. If a voter requires assistance in

voting, the election judge must record, on a form prescribed by the State Board of Elections, the name of the voter who required assistance and the name of the individual providing assistance to the voter.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 19, 2024  
rh/sdk Third Reader - March 21, 2024  
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