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HOUSE BILL HB 142 – SUPPORT

Election Law – Voting Order Priority Individuals Who Need Extra Assistance
Ways and Means Committee January 29th, 2020

Good Afternoon Chair Kaiser and Members of the Ways and Means Committee. I am Tammy Bresnahan, Director of Advocacy for AARP MD. As you know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in the Free State, encompassing almost 900,000 members.

I am here today to support HB 142, which requires that specified individuals with a mobility problem (or assisting such an individual), or accompanied by either a young child or a child with a disability, be given voting order priority at a polling place. The bill specifies procedures associated with providing those individuals with voting order priority and requires the State Board of Elections (SBE) to adopt regulations regarding notice to voters, election judge training, and data collection relating to voting order priority.

AARP believes that voting-rights laws should address the needs of people with mental as well as physical disabilities. Increasing numbers of Americans have dementia or other cognitive impairments. Laws must protect vulnerable populations' access to the polls.

Federal laws mandate improved access to registration and polling places. They also require better outreach to older adults and people with disabilities.

AARP Maryland respectfully requests a favorable report for HB 142.

For questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan, Associate State Director of Advocacy at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

