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Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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HB 1107 Election Law - Polling Places at Continuing Care Retirement Communities

Dear Chairwoman Kaiser and Members of the Committee,

I present House Bill 1107 in hopes of a favorable vote. HB 1107 is a crossfile to Senator West's SB22 and faced opposition because it was applied state wide. We have added an amendment to make this a Baltimore County local bill.

Every campaign speech especially around election time, we politicians love to talk about how much we care about and want to help our seniors. HB 1107 is a bill that does exactly that.

HB 1107 requires Baltimore County board of elections to establish separate precincts at certain continuing care retirement communities to serve that specific retirement community. There are 12 CCRC's in Baltimore County. It would be their choice if they'd like to opt in.

The bill imposes three conditions on the establishment of a polling place at a CCRC:

1. The CCRC must make the polling place available without charge to the local election board.
2. The polling place in the CCRC must meet all applicable requirements for a polling place under the State Election code and the regulations issued by the State Board of Elections.
3. The CCRC must provide assistance to the local election board in recruiting election judges from among the residents of the CCRC to staff the polling place.

Condition 3 is important to note that most residents of CCRCs are elderly but remain active. This is the reason CCRCs are being suggested and not nursing homes or assisted living facilities where residents are more infirm and much less likely to be able to withstand the physically taxing duties of manning a polling place all day during Election Day.

With four CCRCs in my district I have spoken first hand with a number of seniors who continue to be active with civic engagement and who prefer to vote in person. With age unfortunately creating a difficult physical barrier and unpredictable weather around election time, voting can be a serious challenge to those seniors that hope to remain a part of our electoral process.

Currently, Broadmead which is a licensed CCRC in my district, has a polling place located inside the facility.

Most of their residents vote because of this. My hope is we can have more CCRCs making it more convenient for their residents.

Finally, time and again over the years the General Assembly has passed legislation to remove barriers to voting in Maryland. It only makes sense that we do the most we can for our seniors to make it easier and more convenient to exercise their right to vote.