



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Ways and Means

Testimony on: HB0211 – Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Days of Operation

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 26, 2021

Bill Contact: Senator Bhandari

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grass-roots organization with more than 2000 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Potomac east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment, that support and uplift all members of its communities, and that promote equity across all of our diverse communities. DTMG strongly supports HB0211 because it will expand access to voting, thereby allowing stronger participation and representation in our government.

Maryland law currently allows early voting centers to be open only from the second Thursday before a primary or general election through the following Thursday, one week before the election. Maryland's early voting period therefore is only 8 days and includes only one weekend. Recent elections have seen huge interest and increases in early voting, as citizens take advantage of the convenience. Early voting was strongly encouraged during the elections in 2020 to help protect voters during the coronavirus pandemic. The increased interest in early voting resulted in long lines and long waits at many early voting centers.

HB0211 will expand the early voting period from the second Thursday before a primary or general election through the Saturday before the election, thus adding 2 full days, including another weekend day, to the early voting period. This will allow more access to early voting, particularly for eligible voters who have long or unpredictable work shifts, first time voters, voters who want to register and vote on the same day, and all of those who will benefit from having another weekend day off of work to vote. Increasing the number of early voting days should also reduce line lengths and wait times for everyone.

HB0211 will facilitate access to voting for all citizens. Therefore, DTMG strongly supports HB0211 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

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