

HB 247: Election Law - Voting Order Priority - Individuals Who Need Extra Assistance

Senate Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 25, 2021

Position: Support

The Arc Maryland is a statewide advocacy organization dedicated to the rights and quality of life of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. We support HB 247 because we believe it will help people with disabilities to access the right to vote; a fundamental right that Maryland's citizens with developmental disabilities want and deserve to exercise.

This legislation will allow those with mobility issues or those supporting people with mobility issues, those with a young child, or with a child with disabilities to be given priority in voting lines, the use of ballot marking machines, and ballot scanning.

We feel that the requirement, in the bill, for the State Board of Elections to create regulations to ensure that Election Judges are appropriately trained is a key component to ensure that appropriate access and accommodations are supplied to people who need extra assistance to vote.

The bill also requires notices posted in voting centers to alert eligible voters that they may seek priority status. Finally, this legislation requires the collection of data to determine the effectiveness of the system and level of participation.

We believe this bill is one more step toward equity in access to the right to vote for people with disabilities. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,



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