

H.B. 247 TESTIMONY (SUPPORT)

On behalf of Maryland handicapped voters, I support legislation for provision of a second line at polling places for handicapped voters, or an alternate plan to achieve the same goal: better accessibility.

Presently, handicapped persons wait a long time in line at polling places under great duress waiting to vote. A second line for vetted handicapped persons would benefit them immensely. Sadly, because of long lines at the polling place, handicapped persons simply stay away and don't vote--in effect, virtually disenfranchised.

Currently the Maryland Department of Transportation provides permanent hang-tags, and accompanying the tags a permit card that says "MVA Disability Parking Certification" and the name of the person. That—or the hang-tag itself--could be used at polling places to allow the disabled to go to a special second line to vote. Maryland law should also allow for a companion to accompany the disabled person.

The provision of a second line, described above, is only one possible solution. Others that are clearly promulgated through media and mailings and obvious at each polling place could accomplish the same goal: namely, greater and faster access to voting.

I sent this suggestion to the Maryland State Board of Elections. Here is their response:

"To make your suggestion a law, you should talk to you local State representatives. They are the folks that make that laws and then we will implement them."

I followed their suggestion by contacting my state representatives, and now ask you to support HB 142 to benefit handicapped Maryland voters.

On behalf of those voters, I thank you.

Sincerely,

Don Killgallon

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