

**HB656 Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Accessibility by Public Transportation– SUPPORT**

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, March 25, 2021

Centers for Independent Living are federally established nonprofit disability resource and advocacy organizations located throughout Maryland operated by and for people with disabilities. Center staff and Boards are at least 51% people with disabilities. We are part of a nationwide network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) providing the following core services: Information and Referral; Advocacy; Peer Support; Independent Living Skills training and Transition Services.

As organizations that serve many public transit system users who are also people with disabilities, we believe in creating the most access possible to voting centers. This bill will further that access by when possible allowing public transit vehicles to drop off and pick up passengers at the front of the voting center.

Supporting this bill will create one less barrier to getting to a voting center to those who have trouble walking longer distances. It also furthers Maryland's efforts to establish an inclusive voting environment where everything possible is done to ease obstacles to voting.

The undersigned Centers for Independent Living urge you to support HB 656.

Katie Collins-Ihrke, Executive Director  
Accessible Resources for Independence  
1406B Crain Hwy South, Suite 206  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Sarah Sorensen, Executive Director  
Independence Now  
12301 Old Columbia Pike, Suite 101  
Silver Spring, MD 20904

Michael Bullis, Executive Director  
IMAGE Center  
Hampton Plaza, 300 E. Joppa Road, Suite 312  
Towson, MD 21286

Dave Drezner  
The Freedom Center  
550 Highland Street, Suite 510  
Frederick, MD 21701