



BILL: HB0656

BILL TITLE: Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Accessibility by Public Transportation

BILL SPONSOR: Delegate Crosby

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

HEARING DATE: February 9, 2021

FWV Testimony for HB0656

Cristi Demnowicz, Chair
Represent Maryland

Chair Kaiser, Vice-Chair Washington, and Members of the committee,

Represent Maryland, our all-volunteer, grassroots pro-democracy group with members and supporters across the State of Maryland, is in support of HB0656 as it increases ease and access to voting for people who rely on public transportation to reach their polling station. Requiring polling stations to be near public transportation stops - whether during early voting or on election day - is especially important to voters who use mobility-assistance devices such as walkers and wheel-chairs.

However we believe this bill should be amended to be made stronger and in-line with another bill that has been heard by this committee: HB0493, which calls for this same change PLUS the addition of requiring all voting drop boxes to be accessible to voters who use mobility assistance devices such as wheelchairs, etc. These changes should apply to all polling stations, both during early voting and on election day.

Represent Maryland does not see any reason to piece-meal legislation that increases *physical* access to voting so we hope the committee will pass a strong and comprehensive voter accessibility bill this session.

Sincerely,
Cristi Demnowicz
Chair
Represent Maryland
Maryland Voter-LD07