

January 19, 2021

Testimony on HB 247
Election Law - Voting Order Priority - Individuals Who Need Extra Assistance
Ways and Means

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 247, which would require a chief election judge to make reasonable accommodations to ensure that disabled voters and voters with children or disabled children are able to vote without discomfort.

The long wait times experienced by many Marylanders voters in prior elections – including this past election – created an unnecessary barrier to voting, especially for those voters unable to stand for long periods of time. Two or three hour waits in the cold, standing or waiting in a long line, is a tremendous physical hardship for voters with disabilities. Additionally, voters with young children, especially children with special needs, who can't secure reliable and affordable child care before going to the polls can especially experience difficulty if polling place lines are long, requiring additional time away from home in a long line with children. This bill would allow those voters to move to the front of the line to vote, ensuring that they are not unduly impacted by long lines at the polls.

While we encourage continued action to reduce the lines and wait times for all voters, we feel this is an important issue to address. Voting is a fundamental right and we appreciate the continued focus by this committee in ensuring access to voting for all citizens.

We support HB 247 and urge a favorable vote.