



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

Ways & Means Committee

HB 245: Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

January 19th, 2021

Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) is an independent, public policy organization that works to improve policies, programs and services that support people with developmental disabilities and their families in our communities. The DD Council is led by people with developmental disabilities and their families. **From that perspective, the DD Council supports HB 245 which requires that election judge training materials include methods of assistance or accommodation for the elderly or people with disabilities, it also requires a sign be placed at each polling site.**

WHY is this legislation important?

- Voting is a fundamental right that Maryland's citizens with developmental disabilities want and need to participate in.
- We must ensure all of Maryland's voters can access their fundamental right to vote privately and independently.
- There can be many barriers to voting for a person with a disability, widespread ballot marking devices, removes one barrier.
- Helps ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Help America Vote Act.

WHAT does this legislation do?

- Ensures that voters with disabilities are provided access to voting by providing election judges with tools to help ensure people with disabilities can cast their ballot.
- Promotes inclusion by offering training to election judges surrounding accessibility.
- Enables voters with disability to seek any assistance they are entitled to.

While much has been done to increase access to voting in Maryland; this bill will help to create an empowering and supportive environment at the polling site, increasing participation by people with disabilities.

Contact: Keith Walmsley, Director of Public Policy Initiatives; kwalmsley@md-council.org