



February 7, 2023

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Ways and Means Committee
131 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary and Members of the Committee:

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland Inc. has voted to offer **favorable** support for House Bill 580–Election Law – Polling Sites – Firearms Prohibitions.

This bill will prohibit persons from carrying any firearm on both private and public owned buildings which are used for the purpose of polling elections. House Bill 580 also extends its restrictions to prohibit the possession of firearms in nearby parking lots and/or within 100 feet of an active polling site--with the exception of uniformed police officers, who carry for the purposes of civil-protection.

Voter intimidation and suppression is a civil rights issue and can take many forms from creating barriers to accessing ballots to physical confrontations at polling sites. Supreme Court decisions weakening voter's rights and gun restrictions, as well as on-going election denialism have only amplified this issue further. Black and brown people are disproportionately impacted by voter restrictions, and election denialism is centered on "illegal" voting by immigrant populations and "fraud" in our country's urban centers. We must protect the fundamental right of voting, and create the safest environment at the polls for voters and poll workers. For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland supports this measure and asks that you vote favorably on House Bill 580.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland