

SHANEKA HENSON
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 152
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3045 · 301-858-3045
800-492-7122 Ext. 3045
Shaneka.Henson@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 17, 2023

Chair Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Vice Chair Jheanelle K. Wilkins
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

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. We must protect the fundamental right of voting and create the safest environment at the polls for voters and poll workers.

House Bill 580 will prohibit the wearing and carrying of firearms within 100 ft of polling sites during an election, excluding law enforcement officers or security guards on duty. In Maryland, many of our polling sites are private localities such as senior centers, churches, and private halls. Asking each locality to settle this question of firearms at polling sites will not only create confusion, but potentially create conflict between poll workers and voters. A clear state-wide prohibition will help support our poll workers as they fulfill their responsibility of ensuring a safe election.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report on HB580.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaneka Henson".

Delegate Shaneka Henson