

Testimony Against HB0641

Honorable Senators

Please vote against HB0641.

Has anyone done a study showing that this service is wanted by a sufficient number of the public and if desired, can it be done in a cost effective and secure manner? If one receives a ballot by mail, prepares it, and drives to, or takes public transportation to, a drop box, isn't that essentially "curbside" voting?

Local government expenditures would increase by at least \$286,000 in FY 2026, and by at least \$247,000 annually thereafter.

This bill does not discuss the logistics of getting the voting equipment setup outside, and the physical security needed to protect the equipment from the elements. The blind may need a ballot marking device that contains a headset and keypad or blind voters and voters with low vision could vote by listening to the ballot selections and by using the keypad. They may also choose to use the high contrast and large print functions of the voting unit. Will these features be usable while sitting in a car or van?

It would seem easier to use the "Request a mail-in ballot" process than to be driven to the one site in each County that has curbside voting. One's ballot can be mailed or printed from SBE's website. If one has a disability and cannot mark the ballot independently, SBE offers an online tool to help voters mark their ballot. With this tool, most voters with disabilities can make selections without help. If one would like to use this online tool, request a mail-in ballot and check the box saying that you want to print your ballot from SBE's website

The local Boards are tasked with having one curbside voting place per County. In selecting this site, they must consider accessibility of the location to historically disenfranchised communities (an undefined term), the proximity of dense concentrations of voters, accessibility of public transportation (not available in many rural areas of the state), and using community centers. These may be conflicting choices and the bill gives no input as to which factors are the most important.

This bill seems to be a solution in search of a problem when the State website for Access by Voters with Disabilities seems to address most of the situations described by those who testified in favor of this bill during the House debate. See (<https://www.elections.maryland.gov/voting/accessibility.html>).

Please vote against HB0641

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