



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

House Ways and Means Committee  
HB 641: Election Law - Curbside Voting  
February 13, 2024  
Position: Support

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) is an independent, public policy organization that creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. Our vision is that people with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

### WHAT does this legislation do?

- HB641 requires that local boards of elections accommodate curbside voting, and make it available to all registered voters with disabilities.
- It also requires specific policies and procedures for accessible curbside voting that provide options for people with disabilities to vote independently or with assistance as needed.

### WHY is this legislation important?

- Voting is a fundamental right that Maryland's citizens with developmental disabilities want and need to access.
- Researchers have found that with more accessible voting options available in the 2020 election, 62% of people with disabilities voted (a six-point increase over 2016)<sup>1</sup>. Additional methods to increase accessibility may allow even more people with disabilities to vote.
- The lack of accessible polling locations in Maryland remains a barrier for people with disabilities. For example, in the 2022 elections, voters with disabilities were more likely to report difficulties waiting in line and getting inside the polling place than those without disabilities<sup>2</sup>.

This is another critical step to ensure people with developmental disabilities have the access and opportunity to exercise their fundamental right to vote. **For that reason, the Council supports HB 641.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/Program\\_Disability\\_Research/FactSheet\\_Disability\\_Voter\\_Turnout\\_2020.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/Program_Disability_Research/FactSheet_Disability_Voter_Turnout_2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/EAC\\_2023\\_Rutgers\\_Report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/EAC_2023_Rutgers_Report_FINAL.pdf)