

HOUSE BILL 65

G1
HB 656/21 – W&M

(PRE-FILED)

2lr0457

By: **Delegate Crosby**

Requested: September 10, 2021

Introduced and read first time: January 12, 2022

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Bus Stops**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring that if an early voting center is located within a certain
4 distance of a fixed local bus route and to the maximum extent practicable, buses
5 operating on that route allow passengers to embark and disembark at the entrance
6 of the early voting center during the times the center is open for voting; and generally
7 relating to early voting centers.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article – Election Law
10 Section 10–301.1
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article – Election Law**

16 10–301.1.

17 (a) Except as provided under Title 9, Subtitle 3 of this article, during any
18 regularly scheduled primary or general election a voter may vote:

19 (1) in the voter’s assigned precinct on election day; or

20 (2) at an early voting center in the voter’s county of residence on any early
21 voting day in accordance with this section.

22 (b) (1) Each county shall have at least one early voting center established in

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



the county as prescribed in this subsection.

(2) A county with fewer than 50,000 registered voters shall have one early voting center established in the county.

(3) A county with at least 50,000 registered voters but fewer than 100,000 registered voters shall have two early voting centers established in the county.

(4) A county with at least 100,000 registered voters but fewer than 200,000 registered voters shall have three early voting centers established in the county.

(5) A county with at least 200,000 registered voters but fewer than 300,000 registered voters shall have five early voting centers established in the county.

(6) A county with at least 300,000 registered voters but fewer than 400,000 registered voters shall have seven early voting centers established in the county.

(7) A county with at least 400,000 registered voters but fewer than 500,000 registered voters shall have nine early voting centers established in the county.

(8) A county with at least 500,000 registered voters but fewer than 600,000 registered voters shall have 11 early voting centers established in the county.

(9) A county with at least 600,000 registered voters shall have 13 early voting centers established in the county.

(10) In addition to the early voting centers required in this subsection, each county may establish one additional early voting center if:

(i) first, the local board and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional early voting center; and

(ii) then, the State Board approves the establishment of the additional early voting center.

(c) (1) No later than 6 months before a primary election, the local board in each county shall, subject to the approval of the State Board, designate each early voting center in that county.

(2) A local board shall take into account the following factors when determining the location of an early voting center:

(i) accessibility of the early voting center to historically disenfranchised communities, including cultural groups, ethnic groups, and minority groups;

(ii) proximity of the early voting center to dense concentrations of

1 voters;

2 (iii) accessibility of the early voting center by public transportation;

3 (iv) ensuring equitable distribution of early voting centers
4 throughout the county; and

5 (v) maximizing voter participation, including through the use of
6 community centers and public gathering places as locations for early voting centers.

7 (d) Each early voting center shall be open for voting as follows:

8 (1) beginning the second Thursday before a primary or general election
9 through the Thursday before the election; and

10 (2) during the hours between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. each early voting day.

11 (e) Each early voting center shall satisfy the requirements of § 10–101 of this
12 title.

13 **(F) (1) (I) THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES ONLY TO A FIXED LOCAL BUS**
14 **ROUTE:**

15 **1. FUNDED BY A COUNTY OR A MUNICIPAL**
16 **CORPORATION AND OPERATED BY THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OR A**
17 **CONTRACTOR FOR THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION; OR**

18 **2. IN BALTIMORE CITY AND BALTIMORE COUNTY ONLY,**
19 **FUNDED AND OPERATED BY THE MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION.**

20 **(II) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A LONG–DISTANCE**
21 **COMMUTER BUS ROUTE THAT:**

22 **1. IS FUNDED BY THE MARYLAND TRANSIT**
23 **ADMINISTRATION; AND**

24 **2. HAS LIMITED STOPS BETWEEN AN URBAN CENTER**
25 **AND OUTLYING AREAS.**

26 **(2) IF AN EARLY VOTING CENTER IS LOCATED WITHIN ONE–HALF**
27 **MILE OF A FIXED LOCAL BUS ROUTE, BUSES OPERATING ON THAT ROUTE SHALL, TO**
28 **THE MAXIMUM EXTENT PRACTICABLE, ALLOW PASSENGERS TO EMBARK AND**
29 **DISSEMBARK AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE EARLY VOTING CENTER DURING THE TIMES**
30 **THE CENTER IS OPEN FOR VOTING UNDER SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION.**

1 **[(f)] (G)** Beginning 30 days prior to each early voting period the State Board
2 and each local board shall undertake steps to inform the public about early voting and the
3 location of early voting centers in each county, including:

4 (1) a series of public service media announcements;

5 (2) mailings to all registered voters in each county; and

6 (3) other measures as appropriate.

7 **[(g)] (H)** Except as expressly provided in this section, any provision of this article
8 that applies to voting on election day also applies to early voting.

9 **[(h)] (I)** The State Board shall adopt regulations and guidelines in accordance
10 with the requirements of this section for the conduct of early voting.

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
12 January 1, 2023.