

HOUSE BILL 656

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By: **Delegate Crosby**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2021

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Accessibility by Public Transportation**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring that, in a county that has fixed–route public transportation
4 service, each early voting center be located within a certain distance of a public
5 transportation station or stop; and generally relating to early voting centers.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
7 Article – Election Law
8 Section 10–301.1
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2017 Replacement Volume and 2020 Supplement)

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

13 **Article – Election Law**

14 10–301.1.

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

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

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

20 (b) (1) Each county shall have at least one early voting center established in
21 the county as prescribed in this subsection.

22 (2) A county with fewer than 125,000 registered voters shall have one early

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 voting center established in the county.

2 (3) A county with more than 125,000 registered voters but fewer than
3 200,000 registered voters shall have three early voting centers established in the county.

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

6 (5) A county with more than 300,000 registered voters but fewer than
7 450,000 registered voters shall have seven early voting centers established in the county.

8 (6) A county with more than 450,000 registered voters shall have eleven
9 early voting centers.

10 (7) In addition to the early voting centers required in this subsection, each
11 county may establish one additional early voting center if the State Board, in collaboration
12 with the local board, and the governing body of the county agree to establish an additional
13 early voting center.

14 (c) No later than 6 months before a primary election, the State Board, in
15 collaboration with the local board in each county, shall designate each early voting center
16 in that county.

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

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

20 (2) during the following hours:

21 (i) in a presidential general election, during the hours between
22 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. each early voting day; and

23 (ii) in all other elections, during the hours between 10 a.m. and
24 8 p.m. each early voting day.

25 (e) Each early voting center shall:

26 **(1) IN A COUNTY THAT HAS FIXED-ROUTE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
27 **SERVICE, BE LOCATED NOT MORE THAN 500 FEET FROM A PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
28 **STATION OR STOP; AND**

29 **(2)** satisfy the requirements of § 10-101 of this title.

30 (f) Beginning 30 days prior to each early voting period the State Board and each
31 local board shall undertake steps to inform the public about early voting and the location

1 of early voting centers in each county, including:

- 2 (1) a series of public service media announcements;
- 3 (2) mailings to all registered voters in each county; and
- 4 (3) other measures as appropriate.

5 (g) Except as expressly provided in this section, any provision of this article that
6 applies to voting on election day also applies to early voting.

7 (h) The State Board shall adopt regulations and guidelines in accordance with the
8 requirements of this section for the conduct of early voting.

9 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
10 October 1, 2021.