

HOW THE MDVRA FIGHTS VOTER INTIMIDATION, DECEPTION & OBSTRUCTION



Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

The MDVRA protects your rights as a Maryland voter

The Maryland Voting Rights Act sets new standard for protecting voters of color at the state level. To learn about all its key provisions, visit www.mdvra.org.

What is “voter intimidation”?

Voter intimidation occurs when someone does or says something that makes you feel unsafe about exercising your right to vote. Intimidation might pressure you into voting a certain way, or to not to vote at all.

What is “voter deception”?

Voter deception occurs when someone knowingly spreads false or misleading information to interfere with voting, such as telling people to vote at the wrong time or place.

What is “voter obstruction”?

Voter obstruction involves blocking, delaying, or otherwise interfering with voters’ access to polling places, ballot drop boxes, or the voting process itself.

Does this happen in Maryland? — Yes!

- In Frederick County during the November 2024 general election, multiple political campaigners campaigning against a reproductive freedom constitutional amendment berated voters as they parked their cars and walked to the polls.
- On November 8, 2024, several Maryland Board of Elections offices had to be evacuated in response to emailed bomb threats.
- On November 8, 2022, the ACLU of Maryland’s Election Protection Hotline received a report of a man in the parking lot of a polling place with a very large military vehicle who was harassing voters.
- In February 2021, a man in Frederick, Maryland was charged and convicted of mailing letters threatening violence to neighbors who displayed lawn signs in support of particular candidates.

What are examples of illegal voter intimidation, deception, and obstruction?

- Phone calls claiming that bad things will happen if someone votes — for example, that their information will be used by law enforcement, credit card companies, or ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement).
- Police officers write down the license plate numbers of people going to voter registration meetings.
- Physically blocking access to a polling place.
- Pretending to be an election official, either at the polling place or by visiting you at your home, and suggesting your vote was illegal.
- Rumors about dysfunctional or hacked voting machines, even though voting machines are certified before deployed.

Voting intimidation takes many forms. It can be illegal even if there are no threats of physical violence. As long as the action, in context, would reasonably have the effect of interfering with, coercing, or threatening a person's voting rights, it may be illegal voter intimidation prohibited by the MDVRA.

How does the MDVRA protect against voter intimidation?

- The MDVRA empowers Marylanders to sue a person or group engaged in intimidation, deception, or obstruction.
- The MDVRA prohibits interference with access to the polls or delays in the voting process.
- The MDVRA instructs courts to remedy acts of intimidation or obstruction with appropriate remedies, which may include more time to vote or money damages to the voter.
- The MDVRA bans voter intimidation no matter who does it — including private individuals, campaigns, law enforcement, or officials.

MDVRA EXPLAINED.

Maryland: Fight back against voter intimidation, deception, and obstruction

Pass H.B. 219 Now.

THE MARYLAND VOTING RIGHTS ACT

LEARN ABOUT THE KEY PROVISIONS OF THE MDVRA:
www.mdvra.org

HOW THE MDVRA FIGHTS VOTER SUPPRESSION

The MDVRA protects your rights as a Maryland voter

The Maryland Voting Rights Act sets a new standard for protecting voters of color at the state level. To learn about all its key provisions, visit www.mdvra.org.



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What is “voter suppression”?

Voter suppression refers to standards, policies, and practices that block access to the ballot and disproportionately impact communities of color.

Isn't voter suppression already banned?

While the federal Voting Rights Act was designed to stop voter suppression, the Supreme Court's 2021 decision in the *Brnovich v. DNC* case undercut these protections. Maryland voters now lack meaningful safeguards against discriminatory voter suppression. Other states have responded by passing their own laws to combat voter suppression, and Maryland must follow suit.

What are examples of voter suppression?

- Polling places, early voting sites, or drop box locations that are less accessible to voters of color, leading to turnout disparities.
- Voter roll purges that disproportionately target voters of color without justification.
- Lack of available ballots and unreasonably longer lines at the polls in communities of color.
- Off cycle elections for local office that don't take place alongside presidential or congressional elections and suppress turnout among voters of color.

Does this happen in Maryland? — Yes!

- Since the 2023 Maryland General Assembly session, at least 21 anti-voter bills have been introduced that would have restricted voter access or election administration.
- ACLU of Maryland has documented suppression tactics, such as polling locations with insufficient resources and failures to provide adequate assistance at the polls.

THE MARYLAND VOTING RIGHTS ACT

How does the MDVRA protect against voter suppression?

- The MDVRA allows an individual or organization to bring a lawsuit to challenge voter suppression in court.
- The MDVRA establishes a clear and straightforward legal standard to quickly identify and address practices that suppress voters of color.
- The MDVRA gives local governments a safe harbor to voluntarily address voter suppression before they can be sued, which incentivizes efficient resolution without the need for litigation.

MDVRA EXPLAINED.

Maryland: Fight back
against voter suppression.

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