



**Testimony for the House Environment and Transportation Committee
January 23, 2018**

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PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

HB 5 Real Property - Residential Leases - Voter Registration

SUPPORT

The ACLU of Maryland and Common Cause Maryland support HB 5, which would require landlords to provide their tenants with a voter registration application and information pertaining to voter registration.

HB 5 dovetails nicely with the efforts already underway pursuant to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). Under the NVRA, states are required to provide persons with an opportunity to register to vote when they interact with certain state agencies, including departments of transportation and public assistance offices. Like the NVRA, HB 5 has the potential to further expand access to the ballot by creating another opportunity for eligible voters to receive information about registering to vote.

Improvements to voter registration access is particularly important in Maryland—in 2016, voter turnout was only 66 percent, which means 1.4 million eligible voters did not participate in the 2016 elections. This was the lowest turnout the state had seen since 1992.¹

Finally, the proposal under HB 5 is a cost-effective way to potentially increase voter turnout. As the fiscal and policy note to the bill states, the measure would not require any financial expenditure by the state or local governments.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland and Common Cause Maryland support HB 5.

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¹ NBC Washington—First Read – DMV. Maryland Voter Turnout Ended Up Lower Than Projected. Bryan White. Nov. 10, 2016.