



**Testimony for the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs  
Committee**

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**SB 129 - Baltimore County - Polling Places on Campus**

**SUPPORT**

The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 129, which creates convenient access for polling in colleges in Baltimore County.

Civic engagement and political activism is perhaps most acute on the college campus, as young people gain access to the franchise, become engaged within their communities and grow passionate about social, economic, and political issues.

In *Symm vs. United States*, the Supreme Court upheld students' rights to register and vote in their college town, if they consider it to be their primary residence. *Symm v. United States*, 439 U.S. 1105 (1979). Almost our decades since that decision, college students continue to face hurdles in accessing the ballot, through burdensome voter restriction rules, new voter ID laws, or the absence of voting booths on campus.

SB 129 would make more meaningful the Supreme Court's decision in *Symm* by allowing students to more practically access voter polls on college campuses. Moreover, ease of access to the ballot encourages students to engage in the political discourse.

In the 2012 Maryland general election, 38.3% of eligible young voters (ages 18-24) did not vote.<sup>1</sup> On the national scale, young voters continue to have the lowest turnout, in the 2016 presidential election, roughly 46% voted; the lowest compared to the other age groups.<sup>2</sup> These statistics demonstrate a clear breakdown in access to the ballot for young people and SB 129 has the potential to remedy it.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU of Maryland supports SB 129.

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Board of Elections, Voter Turnout by Age Group, Maryland 2012 General Election. Available at [http://www.elections.state.md.us/press\\_room/2012\\_stats\\_general/2012\\_general\\_voter\\_turnout\\_by\\_age.pdf](http://www.elections.state.md.us/press_room/2012_stats_general/2012_general_voter_turnout_by_age.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

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