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**Testimony for the House Ways & Means Committee
March 3, 2016**

HB 1007 Freedom to Vote Act

SUPPORT

The ACLU of Maryland support HB 1007, which would establish an opt-out system for voter registration in Maryland through the MVA and other social services providers.

The vote is the defining act of citizenship. As a democracy, we should encourage all eligible voters to avail themselves of the franchise. And in so doing, we should make the act of registering to vote itself readily accessible to all eligible voters.

In 1993, the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), better known as the “Motor Voter Act,” required all state agencies that offer public assistance to also offer easily accessible voter registration services. HB 1007 is the logical next step toward engaging eligible Marylanders in our democratic processes by making it easier to register to vote.

Further, we support the implementation of safeguards against liability for ineligible persons who are accidentally registered to vote or who vote based on accidental registration and ensure that communications vis a vis voter registrations are language-accessible.

For these reasons, the ACLU of Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 1007.

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