

# HOUSE BILL 1001

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CF SB 670

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By: **Delegate D. Jones**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Local Board of Elections Employees – Authority at Polling**  
3 **Places**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring a police officer who is on duty at a polling place to obey the  
5 authority of a local board of elections employee; providing that local board employees,  
6 while serving a polling place, have the authority to keep the peace and order the  
7 arrest of certain persons; authorizing local board employees, while serving in a  
8 polling place, to protect certain rights of, deny admission of, and eject certain  
9 challengers and watchers from a polling place under certain circumstances; and  
10 generally relating to the authority of local board employees at polling places.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
12 Article – Election Law  
13 Section 10–304 and 10–311(d) and (e)  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY adding to  
17 Article – Election Law  
18 Section 10–307.1  
19 Annotated Code of Maryland  
20 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

23 **Article – Election Law**

24 10–304.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (a) (1) A police officer who is on duty at a polling place shall obey the order of  
2 an election judge for that polling place **OR A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE.**

3 (2) A police officer making an arrest under an order of an election judge **OR**  
4 **A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE** is fully protected in so doing as if the police officer received  
5 a valid warrant to make the arrest.

6 (b) A police officer who is on duty at a polling place shall protect a challenger or  
7 watcher in the discharge of the duties of the challenger or watcher.

8 **10-307.1.**

9 (A) **WHILE SERVING IN A POLLING PLACE, A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE HAS**  
10 **THE AUTHORITY TO:**

11 (1) **KEEP THE PEACE; AND**

12 (2) **ORDER THE ARREST OF ANY PERSON WHO:**

13 (I) **BREACHES THE PEACE;**

14 (II) **BREACHES ANY PROVISION OF THIS ARTICLE; OR**

15 (III) **INTERFERES WITH THE WORK OF THE ELECTION JUDGES IN**  
16 **CONDUCTING THE ELECTION AND CARRYING OUT THEIR ASSIGNED TASKS.**

17 (B) (1) **WHILE SERVING IN A POLLING PLACE, A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE**  
18 **MAY PROTECT A CHALLENGER OR WATCHER IN THE EXERCISE OF THE RIGHTS OF A**  
19 **CHALLENGER OR WATCHER AS PROVIDED IN § 10-311 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

20 (2) (I) **A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE IS NOT REQUIRED TO ADMIT A**  
21 **CHALLENGER OR WATCHER TO A POLLING PLACE BEFORE THE POLLS OPEN IF THE**  
22 **CHALLENGER OR WATCHER WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE POLLING PLACE AT LEAST 30**  
23 **MINUTES BEFORE ITS OPENING.**

24 (II) **A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE MAY REQUIRE CHALLENGERS**  
25 **AND WATCHERS TO LEAVE A POLLING PLACE BEFORE IT OPENS IF THE LOCAL BOARD**  
26 **EMPLOYEE HAS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE CHALLENGERS**  
27 **AND WATCHERS WILL PREVENT THE TIMELY OPENING OF THE POLLING PLACE.**

28 (C) **A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE MAY EXERCISE THE AUTHORITY UNDER**  
29 **SUBSECTIONS (A) AND (B) OF THIS SECTION INDEPENDENT OF AN ELECTION JUDGE**  
30 **ASSIGNED TO THE POLLING PLACE.**

1 10-311.

2 (d) (1) A challenger or watcher may not attempt to:

3 (i) ascertain how a voter voted or intends to vote;

4 (ii) converse in the polling place with any voter;

5 (iii) assist any voter in voting; or

6 (iv) physically handle an original election document.

7 (2) An election judge **OR A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE** may eject a  
8 challenger or watcher who violates the prohibitions under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

9 (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, an  
10 election judge shall [permit] **ALLOW** an individual other than an accredited challenger or  
11 watcher who desires to challenge the right to vote of any other individual to enter the  
12 polling place for that purpose.

13 (2) A majority of the election judges **OR A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE** may  
14 limit the number of nonaccredited challengers and watchers allowed in the polling place at  
15 any one time for the purpose of challenging the right of an individual to vote.

16 (3) A nonaccredited challenger or watcher shall leave the polling place as  
17 soon as a majority of the election judges **OR A LOCAL BOARD EMPLOYEE** decides the right  
18 to vote of the individual challenged by the challenger or watcher.

19 (4) In addition to restrictions provided under this subsection, all  
20 restrictions on the actions of an accredited challenger or watcher provided under this  
21 subtitle apply to a nonaccredited challenger or watcher.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
23 1, 2026.