



House Bill 83

Elections – Early Voting Centers – Sunday Voting

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Ways and Means Committee

Date: February 10, 2016

From: Michael Sanderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** HB 83. This bill would change early voting days of operation to begin two Sundays prior to Election Day and end the Sunday before Election Day.

Under current law, early voting ends the Thursday prior to Election Day, which gives the local boards of election and the State Board of Elections ample time to update e-pollbooks and deliver them to Election Day polling locations. HB 83 would end the early voting period on Sunday, merely two days prior to election day, making it extremely difficult for small jurisdictions to update e-pollbooks, and making it practically impossible in larger jurisdictions.

An analysis performed by the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy, titled *Voting and the Administration of Elections in Maryland*, confirmed this position. Page 25 of the report stated:

"If early voting were to be extended to the last Sunday before the election, the logistics of delivering updated poll books to polling places in time for setup Monday night become very difficult for smaller jurisdictions and nearly impossible for the larger ones. There would be no safety margin for errors or for uncontrollable externalities such as weather, resulting in a significant risk that multiple precincts would not be ready to open on time."

The analysis continues to raise possible options for extending early voting, but all would result in significant increased costs for State and county governments.

HB 83 poses cost and administrative difficulties that could undermine the smooth and efficient operations of a vital public process. Therefore, MACo would urge the Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE** report on HB 83.