

# The People's Lobby

## 2026 Legislative Priorities



In Maryland, we all want the same things: communities where families can afford to live, feel safe, and have a real say in the decisions that affect our lives. But right now, powerful special interests are stacking the rules to silence voters and keep communities divided – all so they can benefit. Common Cause Maryland is bringing people together to change that: fighting for fair representation, accessible voting, restored voting rights, and people funded elections so our democracy serves everyday people, not just the powerful few. When we build people-power and demand change, we can ensure Maryland's democracy works for all of us. Here's our priorities for the 2026 legislative session.



### Voting & Fair Representation

Maryland Voting Rights Act – Every Marylander deserves to participate freely and fairly in our democratic process. Your vote is your voice on the issues that impact your community. This session, we're working towards passing the Maryland Voting Rights Act, which would:

- Ensure Every Vote Counts Equally: Too often, outdated election systems prevent voters from having equal power at the ballot box. This reform will ensure the state has the power to take action if a government has an election system that weakens the voting power of certain communities.
- Eliminate Barriers to Voting and Stop Intimidation: Too many eligible voters face unnecessary barriers or even harassment when they try to cast their ballot. This reform will ban voter suppression and intimidation in Maryland, giving voters important legal leverage if their rights are infringed upon.

Voting Access for Incarcerated and Returning Citizens – More than 16,000 Marylanders are banned from voting while serving a prison or jail term for a felony conviction. This voting ban strips Marylanders of their political voice, but Maryland can strengthen its democracy by restoring the right to vote. We continue to work with allies who have been impacted by the criminal legal system to put an end to felony disenfranchisement through the Voting Rights for All Act. We also aim to build on the state automatic voter registration program, expanding access to registration to returning citizens as they are released from prison.

Special Elections for Legislative Vacancies – 85% of Marylanders favor special elections to fill legislative vacancies. This session, we will continue to lead efforts to amend the state Constitution to require special elections when a seat is vacated by a member of the Maryland General Assembly on or before a specific period from the candidate filing deadline. This will ensure voters get to exercise one of our most fundamental constitutional rights: the right to select the elected officials who represent them.

Curbside Voting Pilot Program – While Maryland is considered a national leader on voting rights, we continue to fall short when it comes to access for voters with disabilities. Curbside voting would provide voters the opportunity to securely cast their ballot in-person outside of a voting location. Launching this new program as a pilot will ensure we can test and improve the program before we consider making this a permanent statewide method of voting. Expanding our methods of voting is a step towards greater access to democracy for all.

## Anti-Corruption & Accountability

People-Powered Elections – People funded elections, also known throughout the state as fair elections programs, help create a government that better reflects and works for us. Six of the largest counties have all established programs. These local governments will have public servants are more accountable to the people, not wealthy special interests. This session, we will continue to work with allies to pass legislation that would allow local jurisdictions with existing programs to expand to cover local boards of education. We also continue to work toward establishing a program for the General Assembly.

## Media & Technology

Disclosure and Regulation of AI – Artificial Intelligence (AI), deepfakes, and other emerging technologies pose a serious threat to our democracy as they super-charge election disinformation and other anti-voter tactics. In a few clicks, bad actors can create deceptive content about candidates or impersonate election officials, spreading those lies like wildfire. During this session, we will continue to support efforts to regulate and require disclosure of election-related deepfake or AI-generated materials being distributed to the public, to protect voters and the overall integrity of our elections.

## Civil Rights & Civil Liberties

Protecting Immigrant Communities – The Trump administration is trying to instill fear in our communities by attacking our neighbors. But we know wealthy special interests and extreme politicians who try to divide us are the real threat. Our communities are stronger when we all feel safe and have the opportunity to thrive. We'll be working with CASA and partners to end 287(g) programs that allow local and state police officers to act as federal immigration as the administration continues to ramp up enforcement nationwide.

Learn more about our 2026 Legislative Priorities

