

Public Hearing

APPROVED

September 12, 2015

Board President Jim Shalleck called the public hearing to order at 10:09 a.m. In attendance were Board Members Mr. Shalleck, Mrs. Khozeimeh, Ms. Keeffe, Mr. Vincent, Mr. Naimon, Ms. Phillips, and Board Staff Ms. Jurgensen, Ms. McLaughlin, Mrs. Rzeszut, Mr. Quarshie, and Ms. Merino. Also in attendance were 24 interested individuals and Janet McFadden, translator. The following is a summary of discussions during the meeting.

Mr. Shalleck welcomed and thanked the public for their attendance and introduced the Board members and staff.

Mrs. Rzeszut presented the site selection criteria and guidelines detailed in the Agreement for Early Voting Centers under COMAR 33.17.02.03.

Mrs. Rzeszut reviewed a power point presentation of proposed early voting sites: Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, Activity Center at Bohrer Park, Damascus Community Recreation Center, Montgomery County Executive Office Building, Germantown Community Recreation Center, Jane Lawton Community Recreation Center, Long Branch Community Recreation Center, Longwood Community Recreation Center, Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center, Mid County Community Recreation Center, Mid-County Regional Services Center, Potomac Community Center, Silver Spring Civic Building, Upper County Community Recreation Center, Wheaton Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad, and White Oak Community Recreation Center.

Ms. Shalleck thanked staff for the presentation. The Board proceeded to accept public comments. All comments submitted through Wednesday, September 16, 2015, will be provided to the Board and placed on www.777vote.org.

Nancy Navarro, Council Member representing District 4 (Wheaton, Glenmont, and Aspen Hill), spoke in favor of Early Voting sites in Wheaton and Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment A.)

Alan Banoff, on behalf of Darrell Anderson, Chair of the Democratic Central Committee (DCC), stated that DCC recommends that the Wheaton Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad be a replacement for the Wheaton Community Center. He also recommended that the Early Voting sites at Silver Spring Civic Center, Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center, Germantown Community Recreation, Activity Center at Bohrer Park, Executive Office Building, and Jane Lawton Community Recreation Center be maintained. Potential alternatives suggested were Potomac Community Recreation Center instead of Damascus Community Recreation Center and, in addition, moving the Mid-County Recreation Center back to Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center.

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Mr. Vincent inquired why the preference for Bauer instead of the Mid-County location. Mr. Banoff responded that Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center was successful in the past and has a good location, sufficient parking, and serves a large population. He added that Delegates and community members desire an Early Voting site in District 19. (Incorporated as Attachment B.)

Miti Figueredo, Hispanic Democratic Club of Montgomery County, spoke in support of Early Voting locations in Wheaton and Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment C.)

Mr. Vincent asked if there has been any evidence/talk from the community indicating their ease or difficulty in exercising their right to vote due to the location of Early Voting sites. Ms. Figueredo responded that she has heard the community indicate that a closer location to them will facilitate their ability to vote.

Monica Braden, community member, spoke in support of a location in Wheaton or Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment D.) (Mrs. Braden provided her testimony in Spanish and it was translated to the Board in English.)

Bruce Braden, community member, provided written testimony in support of the Wheaton Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad as an Early Voting site. (Incorporated as Attachment E.)

Hugo Sun, community member, provided written testimony in support of a location in Wheaton or Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment F.)

Gladys Salazar, community member, provided written testimony in support of a location in Wheaton. (Incorporated as Attachment G.)

Edith Salazar, community member, provided written testimony in support of a location in Wheaton or Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment H.)

Victor Hernandez, community member, spoke in support of a location in Wheaton and Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment I.) (Mr. Hernandez provided his testimony in Spanish and it was translated to the Board in English.)

Maria Chevez, community member, spoke in support of a location in Wheaton and Aspen Hill. (Incorporated as Attachment J.) (Ms. Chevez provided her testimony in Spanish and it was translated to the Board in English.)

Maria Ramirez, community member, spoke in support of a new site in Wheaton. (Incorporated as Attachment K.) (Ms. Ramirez provided her testimony in Spanish and it was translated to the Board in English.)

Marlene Macias, community member, spoke in support of an Early Voting site in Wheaton. (Incorporated as Attachment L.) (Ms. Macias provided her testimony in Spanish and it was translated to the Board in English.)

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Virgilio Montesinos, community member, spoke in support of an Early Voting site in Aspen Hill that includes Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center or Mid-County Community Recreation Center. (Incorporated as Attachment M.) (Mr. Montesinos provided his testimony in Spanish and it was translated to the Board in English.)

Barbara Sanders, Liaison for the League of Women Voters (LWV), asked that the Board look into various evaluative materials when considering the decision to select Early Voting sites. (Incorporated as Attachment N.)

Mr. Vincent asked if there has been any evidence/talk from the community indicating difficulty in voting at their polling place rather than an Early Voting site. Ms. Sanders responded that comments have been received from the community, on the LWV hotline as well as throughout the county, that voting on Election Day is more difficult.

Dan McQue, Vice President of the Montgomery County Young Republicans Club (spoke of his personal opinion), is in support of Early Voting sites in Olney and Potomac. Mr. McQue suggested that an Early Voting site be located in the Leisure World Community instead of at Silver Spring Civic Center as there is difficulty with parking. He noted that Leisure World is the largest voting precinct in the county and an Early Voting site should be placed there.

Cathy Drzyzgula, Council Member for the City of Gaithersburg, spoke in support of the Activity Center at Bohrer Park. (Attachment O)

Ms. Keeffe asked that since the Activity Center at Bohrer Park was first used in 2014, if the community had difficulty accessing or locating the Early Voting site. Ms. Drzyzgula responded that the Early Voting site was easily located to Gaithersburg High School and several of her constituents were pleased with the location.

Lawanda Edwards, representing Senator Manno's office, spoke in support of restoring the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center as an Early Voting site for District 19 and its Delegation to include, Senator Roger Manno, Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Delegate Ben Kramer, and Delegate Maricé Morales.

Mr. Shalleck addressed Council Member Navarro asking, of the testimonies provided, if there is a preference for Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center or Mid-County Recreation Center. Council Member Navarro responded that the low income community prefers the Mid-County Community Recreation Center due to easy accessibility.

Mr. Naimon asked what Council Member Navarro's thoughts were on Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center's location and its accessibility to Olney and Aspen Hill. Council Member Navarro responded that she recognized there are limited number of Early Voting sites and either Bauer or Mid-County would be accessible for the low income community. She added that, if there was sufficient funding, and if the Legislature would increase the number of sites, then both locations would be ideal. She encouraged the Board to have sufficient outreach to ensure a high voter turnout.

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Sidney Katz, Council Member, spoke in support and agreement with Council Member Navarro's statement as well as City Councilmember Cathy Drzyzgula's statement. He added that there is a need for additional Early Voting sites in Montgomery County if the State is in agreement and funding is available. Ms. Keeffe agreed that additional sites are needed.

Ms. Keeffe thanked the translator and staff for their efforts.

Mr. Shalleck thanked everyone for their comments and attendance.

10-19-15

Date


Jim Shalleck, President

Montgomery County Board of Elections
Public Hearing on Early Voting Locations
September 12, 2015

- President Shalleck and Members of the Board – Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning about the importance of maintaining early voting locations in Wheaton and Aspen Hill.
- I represent District 4 on the County Council, which includes much of the mid-County – from Wheaton in the south to the Howard County line in the north.
- There are many very good reasons to keep sites in Wheaton and Aspen Hill.
- First, both are centrally located in the County and accessible by public transportation.
- The proposed Wheaton site is easy for people to access who live in the immediate neighborhoods, but also very convenient for commuters who drive down Georgia Ave. every day who live north of the site. Both Ride On and Metro Buses have stops very close by.
- Aspen Hill is similarly situated. Both the current site on Queensguard Road and the former early voting site on Bauer Drive are accessible by public transportation and major highways. Both sites are also convenient for drivers living north of the areas who commute downtown for work.
- While geography and accessibility are important, I wanted to focus my remarks this morning on the people living in these communities and why it is so important we make an effort to engage them in the civic process.
- Wheaton is one of – if not the – most diverse communities in Maryland. People of different backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and socioeconomic statuses call Wheaton home. The Wheaton area is home to a very large Orthodox Jewish community in Kemp Mill that is within walking distance to

the proposed Wheaton location. Wheaton's population is majority-people of color, with nearly 60% Latino and African American.

- Wheaton is also a place where there are pockets of poverty. For example, the percentage of residents without health insurance is more than double the County average.
- We need to make sure the people living in and around Wheaton have an early voting location that is close by and encourages them to participate.
- Similarly, Aspen Hill is also a very diverse community, with about half the population being Latino and African American. There is also a concentration of low income residents living there – with the median household income nearly \$20,000 lower than the County average.
- As the Board considers where to put early voting locations, I hope you consider the populations living in these communities and the challenges they face in getting to the polls.
- Many low income residents are working multiple jobs with irregular hours. They have child care obligations and many not have access to a vehicle. It is much more difficult for low income people to get to the polls on Election Day than those with means. Early Voting is an important opportunity to help level the playing field and make our democratic process more open and accessible.
- Finally, I want to reiterate the message that was sent to you in a letter last month by the County Executive and all 9 of my colleagues on the Council: We stand ready to fund the cost of relocating the Wheaton Early Voting site to the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad. The 10 County elected officials are in full agreement that maintaining an early voting location in Wheaton is a top priority and we will make sure those resources are available.
- Thank you again for this opportunity. As chair of the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee, I look forward to receiving an update in the coming months on your preparations for the 2016 election.

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- Thank you again for this opportunity. As chair of the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee, I look forward to receiving an update in the coming months on your preparations for the 2016 election.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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**STATEMENT BY
DARRELL ANDERSON, CHAIR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL COMMITTEE
to
THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 12, 2015**

Dear President Shalleck and Members of the Board of Elections:

On behalf of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee (MCDCC), thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Democratic Party's recommendations for early voting locations for the 2016 Primary and General Elections.

The MCDCC is the governing body of the Montgomery County Democratic Party. My colleagues and I on the Central Committee are elected for four-year terms during each Gubernatorial Democratic Party Primary Election. Since there are over 350,000 registered Democrats in the County, we represent the Central Committee's constituents of over 350,000 registered voters in the county.

First, I would like to thank the officers, members and staff members of the Montgomery County Board of Elections for the extensive amount of work you have taken—and will undertake—to implement the expansion of the early voting process for the 2016 election cycle. The MCDCC relied on the Board of Elections' recommendations and research, and we appreciate the Board's work in this area.

The MCDCC also applauds the Maryland General Assembly for reaffirming this successful practice and maintaining the ability of Montgomery County to operate nine early voting sites.

By means of reviewing the data on early voting, now through three election cycles and six elections, it is clear that early voting in Montgomery County has been an unqualified success. Since 2010, the number of residents choosing to vote early has almost tripled for primary elections and doubled for general elections. These data confirm that, regardless of party affiliation or for those residents choosing no party affiliation, early voting has had a significant, positive impact on voter turnout. Appendix A summarizes early voting turnout by affiliation from 2010 to 2014. Appendix B summarizes percentages of increase and decrease in early voting from 2010 to 2014 by party.

The question now is to employ early voting sites that will enhance an already successful initiative. With the elimination of the Wheaton Community Recreation Center Gymnasium due to construction, the MCDCC recommends that the Board choose an appropriate site in the same area. The Wheaton site is centrally located in an area with a high percentage of low income housing and minority residents, as well as easy access to public transportation. A Wheaton site is needed to serve an important community.

Recommendation #1: The MCDCC recommends that the MCBOE select the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad as a replacement for the Wheaton Community Center Early Voting Site. The County Executive and County Council support Early Voting at this site, which will be paid for with funds from the County.

Of the remaining eight early-voting sites, we believe that six have served the residents of Montgomery County well and have met the Board's criteria of accessibility by public transportation, location in diverse areas of the county, turnout numbers showing community acceptance, adequate parking, and handicap accessibility. These six are the Silver Spring Civic Center, Marilyn Praisner Center, Germantown Community Center, Bohrer Center in Gaithersburg, Executive Office Building, and Jane Lawton Recreation Center.

Recommendation #2: Maintain the early-voting sites at the Silver Spring Civic Center, Marilyn Praisner Center, Germantown Community Center, Bohrer Center in Gaithersburg, the Executive Office Building, and the Jane Lawton Recreation Center.

The two remaining sites, Damascus and the MidCounty Recreation Center, have the lowest performing turnout for voters of all affiliations. Although they serve areas of the county important for citizens in those locations, the MCDCC recommends that the Board consider alternatives, in determining whether the low numbers of voters at these sites meets the law's intended purpose of increasing voter turnout. We believe the Board should consider these alternatives:

Potential Alternatives: If the Board decides to replace the Damascus site, we believe an appropriate site that would serve more voters is the Potomac Community Recreation Center, which meets each of the Board's criteria. Additionally, we believe the Board should move the MidCounty Recreation Center site back to the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center, which meets the Board's criteria and previously performed well as an early-voting site.

A criterion that generally does not get much attention in discussions of early voting sites is how employment patterns impact a voter's use of a specific early voting site. For example, early voting sites open at 10:00 a.m., long after most people have left for work. Early-voting data from the 2014 general election show that a majority of voters vote "out-of-district"; this is true for Democrats and Republicans in legislative districts with contested elections. For example, the lowest three early-voting sites for Democrats voting in-district in 2014 were the Jane Lawton Center (34%), the Executive Office Building (40%), and Bohrer Park (41%). The lowest three early-voting sites for Republicans voting in-district in 2014 were the Executive Office Building (36%), Bohrer Park (50%), and Damascus (85%). It is clear that some of the current early-voting sites are serving the purpose of providing convenience for County residents during the workday as well as in their home communities.

Mr. President and Board members, thank you again for the opportunity for the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee to recommend early voting locations that advance voter enfranchisement.

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

With regards,



Darrell Anderson
Chair, Montgomery County
Democratic Central Committee

APPENDIX A: History of Early Voting

2010 Gubernatorial Primary Election

County	Polls	EV	% of Total	Prov	Abs	Total Voters	Eligible Voters	Turnout
Montgomery	98,619	7,585	6.67%	1,740	5,735	113,679	569,234	19.97%

By Party

Democrat	72,287	6,087	7.26%	1,180	4,273	83,827	321,759	26.05%
Republican	22,761	1,259	4.93%	317	1,223	25,560	122,513	20.86%

2010 Gubernatorial General Election

County	Polls	EV	% of Total	Prov	Abs	Total Voters	Eligible Voters	Turnout
Montgomery	240,130	26,756	9.10%	6,927	20,791	294,604	573,431	51.38%

By Party

Democrat	143,794	18,017	10.01%	4,437	13,666	179,914	324,195	55.50%
Republican	57,459	5,139	7.57%	1,179	4,118	67,895	123,253	55.09%

2012 Presidential Primary Election

County	Polls	EV	% of Total	Prov	Abs	Total Voters	Eligible Voters	Turnout
Montgomery	76,085	10,037	10.91%	1,101	4,767	91,990	581,840	15.81%

By Party

Democrat	48,686	7,172	12.05%	644	2,993	59,495	326,929	18.20%
Republican	24,975	2,573	8.74%	285	1,591	29,424	122,181	24.08%

2012 Presidential General Election

County	Polls	EV	% of Total	Prov	Abs	Total Voters	Eligible Voters	Turnout
Montgomery	329,726	77,939	16.92%	39,714	13,506	460,885	616,016	74.82%

By Party

Democrat	184,464	52,920	19.63%	24,097	8,162	269,643	345,449	78.06%
Republican	73,411	11,285	11.95%	7,782	1,921	94,399	125,185	75.41%

2014 Gubernatorial Primary Election

County	Polls	EV	% of Total	Prov	Abs	Total Voters	Eligible Voters	Turnout
Montgomery	84,160	18,875	16.85%	2,467	5,699	111,994	630,255	17.65%

By Party

Democrat	68,172	16,437	27.63%	1,758	4,679	59,495	354,078	25.71%
Republican	12,512	1,785	11.60%	292	803	15,392	121,851	12.63%

2014 Gubernatorial General Election

County	Polls	EV	% of Total	Prov	Abs	Total Voters	Eligible Voters	Turnout
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Montgomery	211,729	35,443	16.92%	6,554	13,730	267,456	634,663	42.14%
By Party								
Democrat	125,358	24,514	15.13%	3,938	8,162	161,972	357,137	45.35%
Republican	48,623	6,202	10.44%	1,263	3,333	59,421	121,520	48.90%

APPENDIX B: Trends in Early Voting by Affiliation

Summary of Early Voting History

By Party	Election P = Primary G =General	Early Voters	% of Total Voters	Inc/Dec from 2010*	Year-to- year Inc/Dec
Democrat	2010 P	6,087	7.26%	na	na
	2010 G	26,756	9.10%	na	na
	2012 P	7,172	12.05%	17.8%	17.8%
	2012 G	52,920	19.63%	197.8%	197.8%
	2014 P	16,437	27.63%	61.4%	23.0%
	2014 G	35,443	16.92%	32.5%	-32.0%
Republican	2010 P	1,259	4.93%	na	na
	2010 G	2,573	7.57%	na	na
	2012 P	2,573	8.74%	100.4%	100.4%
	2012 G	11,285	11.95%	438.6%	438.6%
	2014 P	1,785	11.60%	41.8%	-31.0%
	2014 G	6,202	10.44%	141.0%	-45.0%
Unaffiliated*	2010 G	3,482	7.65%	na	na
	2012 G	13,286	14.38%	381.6%	381.6%
	2014 G	4,466	10.28%	28.6%	33.6%

* The number of early-voting sites increased from 5 in 2010 to 9 in 2012.

**Unaffiliated voters have few reasons to vote in primaries.

TESTIMONY OF THE HISPANIC DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
September 12, 2015

Good morning. My name is Miti Figueredo, and I am here on behalf of the Hispanic Democratic Club of Montgomery County. We would like to express our strong support for maintaining early voting locations in both Wheaton and Aspen Hill for the upcoming 2016 elections.

Wheaton and Aspen Hill are incredibly diverse communities, with a mix of Latino, Black, Asian, and White residents—and a significant number of these residents are immigrants who cherish the right to vote in their adopted country. These communities also include a higher percentage of low income residents than the County as a whole, and many of these lower income residents work long hours and rely on public transportation. If they do not have access to early voting sites in their communities, we run the risk that they simply will be unable to cast a vote.

We believe that our democratic process is strengthened by increasing voter participation across lines of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. Maintaining early voting sites in Aspen Hill and Wheaton also ensures that many of Montgomery County's newest voters can exercise this fundamental right of American citizenship.

We urge the Board of Elections to keep these two critical early voting centers open. As you know, while Montgomery County's 2014 primary election voter turnout was disappointingly low, the number of early voters has almost tripled for primary elections since 2010. Let's make sure we continue providing accessible early voting sites for all Montgomery County voters, especially those in traditionally underserved communities.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Mi nombre es Monica Braden y vivo en el área de Wheaton/Glenmont. Ejercer mi voto es una responsabilidad cívica que mi familia practica desde muchos años. Soy madre de tres hijos y tengo mi propio negocio de cuidado infantil en el hogar. También me preocupo por que otros ejerzan este derecho y lo hago participando cívicamente en mi comunidad y hablando con otros familiares, vecinos y mis clientes.

Como madre también me interesa que mis hijos desde ya empiecen a ver como sus padres participan en este proceso de votaciones electorales.

Por eso solicito que se mantengan estos recintos de votación temprana en Wheaton, al igual que en Aspen Hill, por que los residentes del área merecen la oportunidad de poder votar en lugares accesible ya sea poder ir caminando, tomando transporte público, o manejando a estos sitios.

Monica Braden,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Board of Elections Testimony

Good morning,

My name is Bruce Braden and I live less than a mile away from the proposed early voting center at the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad.

It is important that the County keeps this site that is accessible to many communities who live around this area. I am proud to live in Wheaton due to its diversity and like me, many of my neighbors understand the importance of realizing our civic duty.

Please place these early voting centers sites in neighborhoods that are accessible to the residents.

Thank you,

Bruce Braden,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Buenos días mi nombre es Hugo Sun, quiero expresar mi opinión a que se mantengan los recintos de votación temprana en el área de Wheaton y Aspen Hill.

Como todos sabemos, nuestro condado ha tenido cambios demográficos de mucha importancia en especial en las comunidades de color. Facilitar que nuestras comunidades tengan acceso al voto de formar fácil y rápida, es vital no solo para concientizar pero para incentivar a los votantes.

Estos lugares son de gran beneficio para los que residimos en estas áreas, ya que nos permite ejercer nuestro derecho a votar, sin ninguna dificultad. Porque igual podemos caminar, e usar el transporte público, es decir son lugares accesibles.

Gracias,

Hugo Sun

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Buenos días, mi nombre es Gladys Salazar y vivo en Wheaton. Ejercer mi voto es un acto cívico que tomo muy en serio, ya sea para votar en las elecciones primarias o generales. Poder hacerlo en un lugar que este cercano a mi casa es un beneficio que quisiera se mantuviera en Wheaton, especialmente porque yo no manejo y son mis hijos los que me llevan. El voto temprano a mí me conviene mucho por mi edad, y es importante que estos recintos se encuentren cerca de mi comunidad.

Gracias por permitirme expresar mi opinión y espero que le den la importancia que se merece el mantener los recintos en lugares accesibles a los ciudadanos como yo.

Gladys Salazar

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Buenos días, primeramente gracias por darme la oportunidad de expresar mi opinión en relación a este tema que es de mucha importancia para todos los residentes del condado, especialmente a los que viven en Wheaton y Aspen Hill.

Considero que es de suma importancia mantener recintos de votación temprana que sean accesible para la comunidad que vive en estos sectores. Para mi es importante que permanezcan los centros de votación temprana en lugares estratégicos. Yo llevo muchos años votando y siempre lo hago antes del día de las votaciones generales.

Por esto les pido que consideren mantener los recinto en áreas en donde existan vías de transporte accesible al centro de votación temprana, porque nos facilita a realizar nuestro derecho cívico como es el de votar y así elegir a nuestros representantes.

Muchas gracias por su tiempo,

Edith Salazar

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Mi nombre es Víctor Henríquez y por muchos años he vivido en Wheaton. Mi familia y yo tomamos nuestro deber cívico muy en serio. Mis hijos, vecinos y yo hemos estado involucrados en el proceso de la toma de decisiones siendo miembros activos y haciendo escuchar nuestra voz.

Es por eso que estoy aquí para que se considere mantener los centros de votación temprana en las áreas de Wheaton y Aspen Hill. Esto facilita a nuestra comunidad a votar en lugares cerca de sus hogares. También estos recintos son accesibles a personas que trabajan y pueden votar fácilmente de regreso a sus hogares.

Gracias por la oportunidad.

Victor Henriquez

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Victor Henriquez

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Muy Buenos días mi nombre es Maria Chevez y vengo a testificar a favor de mantener los sitios de votación temprana en Wheaton y en Aspen Hill.

Vivimos en un sector del condado con mucha diversidad racial y socioeconómica. Wheaton en especial cuenta con una población mayoritaria de Latinos. El derecho al voto es un privilegio que todos los ciudadanos tenemos. Considero que el poder ejercer nuestro voto en lugares accesibles es un derecho que nuestro gobierno le debe al electorado.

Por esto les pido que mantenga sitios accesibles como en Wheaton y en Aspen Hill ya que se puede llegar a estos de muchas formas. Muchas personas como yo que manejamos hacia nuestros trabajos estos recintos nos quedan en el camino.

Gracias por permitirme estar aquí.

Maria Chevez

[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Buenos días me llamo Maria Ramirez y les agradezco la oportunidad de dar a conocer mi posición sobre el tema de los sitios de votación temprana.

Me gustaría que se mantuviera el nuevo sitio en Wheaton ya que no solo es accesible para mí pero también para muchas personas de la comunidad que viven en los alrededores.

Espero que consideren la accesibilidad y diversidad de las comunidades cercanos a estos centros ya que mientras más se facilita el acceso a centro temprano de votaciones, se está mandando un mensaje muy fuerte y positivo que nuestros votos valen.

Muchas gracias por su tiempo.

Maria Ramirez

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Mi nombre es Marlene Macias.

El involucramiento en los procesos cívicos es algo muy importante, lo cual es un privilegio para todo ciudadano Americano.

Me enorgullece ser parte de este proceso y es por eso le pido a la Junta Electoral que mantenga centros de votación temprana que sean céntricos para los residentes del condado como yo, que vivimos en Wheaton. Es importante que estos recintos puedan ser accesados a pie, en carro, o en bus.

Nuestro condado goza de una diversidad cultural y racial inmensa, pero muchos de nosotros, especialmente en mi comunidad Latina, para poder ejercer el voto dependemos de muchos factores ya que mantenemos horarios que no son muy flexibles. La votación temprana es de gran beneficio para todos nosotros.

Gracias por permitirme estar aquí con ustedes y exponer mi opinión.

Marlene Macias

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Testimonio ante la Junta Electoral

Muy buenos días, me llamo Virgilio Montesinos y estoy aquí para abogar por que se mantenga el centro de votación temprana en Aspen Hill, ya sea en Bauer Drive o en el Centro Comunitario de Mid-County.

Yo vivo en Bel-Pre y el poder tener el recinto cerca de donde yo vivo, o en la pasada hacia mi trabajo, es de mucha ayuda. Si queremos incrementar el número de votantes es necesario acomodarse a las necesidades de las comunidades aledañas a estos centros de votación. Muchos de nosotros trabajamos varios empleos y la votación temprana es un gran recurso para poder ejercer nuestro derecho al voto. Mientras mas conveniente y fácil sea, mejor todavía.

Gracias por todo su apoyo y espero que tomen en cuenta mi opinión.

Virgilio Montesinos

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of Montgomery County, MD, Inc.

Testimony for Saturday, Sept. 12, 2015
Montgomery County Board of Elections on Early Voting Center Selection

Good morning:

I am Barbara Sanders, liaison to the Board of Elections from the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD. The League is pleased that you are providing the public this opportunity to comment as you review the locations for the nine county early voting centers for the 2016 election cycle. You have also assisted the public by having the staff evaluate proposals the Board received and by listing the 16 sites that currently meet the state's criteria and the county's financial situation.

Value of multiple centers. The League also commends the Board and the County government for your commitment to continue supporting the full complement of nine centers – including the one optional center that required authorization and funding by the County. The Montgomery LWV believes that this move continues to be a way to assure maximum access to secure voting by the largest number of voters.

Criteria. We recognize that Montgomery County has a history of considerably expanding upon the state geographic criteria of covering 80% of the county's registered voters within the nine centers' five-mile circles. The Board and the League also share the importance of continuity in using the same precinct locations across election cycles whenever possible for voter familiarity and participation. The League hopes a similar perspective will continue to apply to the early voting centers although we understand that at least one replacement is necessary due to the removal and redevelopment of the site of the current Wheaton Community Recreation Center. We are pleased that the County Executive and Council have again stepped forward guaranteeing funds for renting a private facility if it is the best replacement.

The League of Women Voters has no position on specific early voting center sites to add or change, but we strongly suggest that the selection of the new center and, especially, any changes to the current eight not only further expand the geographic coverage in the county, but also aim for the highest percentage possible of the registered population to be within the designated radius of all the combined centers. We also hope that the Board will particularly consider the registered populations of the precincts that are historically lower than the County average: for example it is possible that the primary and General Election Day hours do not fit their schedule, and that more convenient early voting centers would allow greater participation in these historically less active precincts.

Additionally, we hope your review of any new or changed sites will consider the needs of those who are most challenged to exercise their right to vote due to economic considerations. As Shane Rock of Interfaith Works testified at the August Board meeting, this includes not only easy geographical access to their current residences or shelters, but also to their employment or gathering sites. It also requires that these early voting centers be accessible by public transportation throughout all the hours early voting is offered, not just during limited rush-hour service on weekdays.

In closing, we again thank you for this opportunity to comment. We also encourage you to continue to make any additional evaluative material you consider in your decisions this month available on your website. We see this open process as one more way for the public to understand and endorse the decisions you make about the early voting centers and your commitment to conduct a fair election.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BOARD OF ELECTIONS PUBLIC HEARING
September 12, 2105

Members of the Board of Elections, thank you for providing this opportunity to give input on Early Voting Sites for the 2016 Election. My name is Cathy Drzyzgula and I am a member of the Gaithersburg City Council. I appear before you today to express the City's strong support for the continuation of the Activity Center at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg as an Early Voting site.

As you are aware, the Activity Center was used for the first time for Early Voting in the 2014 Election cycle. Even though 2014 was the first time Early Voting occurred at this location, 4,456 votes or 12.6% of all the total Early Votes in that general election were cast at the Activity Center. Voter turnout at this site was the fourth highest of all nine of the Early Voting sites and had the highest turnout of any of the new sites.

The Activity Center offers a number of amenities that make it ideal for use as an Early Voting Center. It is easily accessible from Interstates I270 and I370 and Maryland Route 355, is within walking distance from the MARC train, and is on several majority bus routes, including the heavily used 55 Route that serves Rockville, Gaithersburg, Germantown and Shady Grove Metro. Gaithersburg, including the neighborhoods near the Bohrer Center, is home to a diverse population, including many low income residents. The facility has ample parking, is handicapped accessible and is modern, clean and welcoming. The Activity Center offers a convenient location not only for Gaithersburg residents, but for residents throughout the County to vote.

The Gaithersburg Mayor and Council urge the Board of Elections to select the Activity Center at Bohrer Park as an Early Voting Center for the 2016 Election. We are committed to working with the Board to better serve our constituents and support the election process.