

# disABILITY LAW CENTER

OF VIRGINIA



Protection & Advocacy for Virginians with Disabilities

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March 2 2026

As you are aware, the disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV) surveyed polling sites during the Fall 2025 election season. Enclosed, please find dLCV's report with our findings and recommendations from our surveys completed during early voting season as well as our polling site surveys done on Election Day, November 4, 2025.

Please be aware that, due to limitations in funding, we solely relied on volunteers for polling surveys during the 2025 Election season. That being said, we collected 46 surveys from a variety of counties in Virginia.

dLCV staff respectfully requests that you review the report and provide us with a written response by April 3, 2026. Once we have your written response, we will publish our report and your comments via our website, social media and other outlets. dLCV appreciates the collaboration with the Virginia Department of Elections(ELECT). If you have questions about the report, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly. You can reach me at: (804) 662-7305. My email address is: [Rachel.Loria@dLcV.org](mailto:Rachel.Loria@dLcV.org)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Loria".

Rachel Loria  
Senior Disability Rights Advocate  
disAbility Law Center of Virginia

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Triplett".

Julie Triplett  
Independence Program Access Unit Manager  
disAbility Law Center of Virginia

## **Accessibility Report of Voting Polls, Election Season Fall 2025**

Created by the disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV)

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV) is mandated by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 (PL 107-252) to advocate for the rights of Virginia's voters with disabilities.

Through dLCV's Protection and Advocacy for Voter Access (PAVA) program, dLCV educates individuals, communities, poll workers and the Board of Elections regarding the voting rights of people with disabilities by:

- Monitoring and investigating complaints about polling place accessibility and privacy;
- Collaborating with other voting rights advocates for systemic change for people with disabilities;
- Participating in the implementation of provisions of the Help America Vote Act affecting people with disabilities; and
- Assisting and representing individual voters in the state-based administrative grievance processes.

Another part of dLCV's voting work includes surveying polling sites during early voting and on Election Day to determine if sites are accessible and taking corrective action if they are not. Every Election Day, dLCV staff and volunteers travel to different cities and counties in Virginia to survey a sample of polling places from that city or county. Please note that, due to funding constraints, dLCV relied completely on volunteers to complete the surveys for the Election 2025 season. dLCV trained all of our volunteers on how to complete the surveys and what to look for when surveying. dLCV volunteers completed 47 surveys.

Through the surveys, we learned that the majority of polling places do not have major barriers that would prevent voters from accessing the buildings.

This report summarizes dLCV's findings and recommendations. Enclosed with the report is the data from the surveys and photographs of inaccessibility at some of the polling sites.

## Survey Results

### Curbside Voting

84% of our surveyors told us that the polling site that they visited had curbside voting with no barriers. Of the polling sites that did have barriers, the key issues that surveyors reported included: small signs, no phone number listed on the sign or bell present and signs falling over. One of our volunteers in New Market at the Fire and Rescue Station (9771 S. Congress Street) stated that the sign “was turned around, out of view of inbound traffic flow. The sign faces a predominantly empty lot with a car parked directly in front blocking the view even further.”

Some surveyors noted that the curbside voting was located in the accessible parking spaces. One example was David A. Harrison Elementary School in Disputanta. This is a concern because using accessible parking as curbside voting limits the actual number of accessible parking spaces. Please be aware that not all voters who have disabilities want to use curbside voting and the lack of accessible parking spaces may limit those who wish to vote inside the building. While we recognize that curbside voting is a good option for some individuals who have disabilities, it is important to note that poll workers should not assume that people who have disabilities will only vote using curbside voting.

### Accessible Parking:

84% of our surveyors stated that accessible parking was the closest to the door. One issue that arose for surveyors at non-compliant sites was no accessible parking signs on the street when street parking was the only parking option. For example, one volunteer who surveyed First Baptist Church on Monument Avenue in Richmond stated: “Technically, street parking was closest to the door and there was no accessible signage on either side of the block.”

A volunteer who surveyed in Hopewell at Dupont Elementary School stated, “The way the parking lot was set up, the accessible parking spaces were close to the ramp but a good distance to the entrance.” Another surveyor who surveyed New Market Fire and Rescue noted the barrier to accessible parking was that partisan tents were using the spaces: “There are 4 accessibility parking spaces, 2 were blocked by party tents and tables.”

### Accessible Entrance Same as Voting Entrance

For this question, we asked surveyors to determine whether there were separate accessible entrances and voting entrances. Ideally, the voting entrance would be accessible and there would be no need for a separate accessible entrance. Surveyors noted that 93% of the sites have the same voting entrance and accessible entrance. One volunteer noted that Rolling Ridge Elementary School in Sterling had an inaccessible voting entrance. The surveyor did not provide narratives for this issue.

### Smooth, Clear Path of Travel

dLCV explained to volunteers that a smooth, clear path of travel means that there is an accessible path to the door; there are no potholes, trees or barriers that prevent a person from getting to the voting entrance. This also means that there are curb cuts to get onto the sidewalk and a ramp (if needed) close to the entrance.

89% of our surveyors noted there was a smooth, clear path to the door. Some of our surveyors noted there was an extremely far walk from the ramp to the accessible voting entrance. One instance in particular was at Patrick Copeland Elementary School in Hopewell. Surveyors at non-compliant sites further noted a lack of curb cuts and ramps. Finally, a surveyor in Waynesboro who surveyed Waynesboro Public Library noted that there were signs and tents in the parking lot, which created physical access issues to the entrance.

### Can Doors Be Opened with One Hand?

94% of our surveyors noted the doors at their locations could be opened with one hand. One surveyor in Sterling who surveyed Parkview High School stated voters who needed assistance opening the door had to ring a doorbell and wait for assistance. The same surveyor noted a similar instance at Rosa Lee Carter Elementary School in Sterling. This surveyor further identified at Guilford Elementary School in Sterling that the door was propped open, but it was not open enough for her to get through the door. Please be mindful that, if a door is propped open, it must be open wide enough for voters to enter.

### Accessible Voting Machines

Only 14 of the 47 surveys had information about the inside of the polling site. Please note that, due to ELECT's guidance to dLCV, surveyors only surveyed the inside of their own polling site.

### Audio Ballot Machines

dLCV asked volunteers who were voting in their own polling location to find out if the location had accessible voting machines for those who are visually impaired or blind. A surveyor at Warren County High School noted that she did not see the machines. The same surveyor further noted the polling place used only paper ballots.

### Did Poll Workers Know How to Operate the Accessible Machines?

We received 14 responses related to this question. 79% of these responses noted that poll workers did know how to operate the accessible machines.

One surveyor noted that, in New Market at the Fire and Rescue Station referenced previously, the accessible machine was malfunctioning. A surveyor who surveyed First Baptist Church on Monument Avenue in Richmond stated that "The first volunteer I

asked at the check in table was not sure. The second volunteer was able to point to the machine, but it was apparent that neither necessarily knew how to use it. They said it used headphones or something like that based on their training, but it was said in a questioning way. The first volunteers said it had not come up yet, as in no one had needed it so he was not sure.”

### Signs for Assistance

Since 2023, dLVCV has spoken with ELECT regarding the need for signage at polling sites to explain how voters with disabilities can request assistance from poll workers. If voters do not know that they have the right to ask for assistance, they will not ask for it. Fourteen surveyors answered this question, and 5 of the 14 did not notice the above-referenced signage.

ELECT updated its ELECT-649 form in 2024, which both a voter and the individual assisting them must fill out. ELECT has also created signage telling voters they can request assistance with the voting process, which is available on the agency’s website: [https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/accessibility/ADA-POSTERS\\_24x36\\_en.pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/accessibility/ADA-POSTERS_24x36_en.pdf). It is clear from these updated materials that ELECT is aware that communicating the availability of assistance for voters with disabilities is essential. However, according to our surveyors, the signs are not displayed in polling places. Survey results show more work must be done in this area.

### Disability Etiquette

This year, dLVCV asked surveyors if they witnessed any disability etiquette issues while they were surveying polling sites. Surveyors noted that poll workers treated people with disabilities well. For example, in Henrico, when a surveyor went to the Parham Road Registrar’s office for early voting, she commented “The Poll worker used great disability etiquette.” She said, “He asked what I needed. He further asked how he can better assist people with disabilities.”

However, another surveyor who went to New Market Fire and Rescue referenced previously stated that “This was not a welcoming environment. They did not take well to my need for assistance, my asking questions, or particularly the need to make certain assisting documentation such as, ‘The Virginia Assistance-Inside the Polling Place’ form available. Nor were there any visual aids, such as the free magnifiers, made available.” Another surveyor noted that, at the First Baptist Church on Monument Avenue in the City of Richmond, there were no accessible tables for someone who uses a wheelchair or mobility device. This is an accessibility issue for individuals who use wheelchairs that the Department of Elections needs to address.

## Recommendations from dLCV

Based on our findings, there are polling sites that are doing the right thing. However, there are clearly still issues that ELECT must address. It is concerning that dLCV has brought some of these issues to ELECT's attention in previous years and there is still no resolution. dLCV recommends the following:

1. ELECT must continue to promote curbside voting as an option for individuals who have disabilities who wish to use it. Please note that promoting curbside voting as an option includes ensuring there are visible signs for curbside voting, to include a visible phone number or some way of notifying poll workers that a person wishes to vote curbside. This is a repeat recommendation.
2. ELECT should continue training poll workers on how to operate the accessible voting machines. Our surveyors stated that 21% of poll workers did not know how to operate the accessible machines. This is a repeat recommendation.
3. ELECT must ensure that voting equipment is accessible. Specifically, that one or more of the tables at polling spaces can be raised or lowered (for individuals who use a wheelchair or other mobility device).
4. If people must park on the street in order to vote, dLCV asks that ELECT ensure that there are designated and labeled parking options close to the door for individuals who need accessible parking.
5. Since 2023, dLCV has communicated with ELECT regarding the need for signage to explain how to request assistance when casting your ballot. As evidenced by the data from this report and previous reports, many polling sites still do not have these signs. dLCV again recommends ELECT ensure that the signs are posted both inside and outside of all polling locations by the next General Election. Please notify us when all Virginia localities have the signs and that they will be displayed for the next election.
6. dLCV recommends ELECT and local registrars only select new polling spaces that are accessible 365 days a year. This is a repeat recommendation.

To help effectuate these recommendations, dLCV requests to be an exhibitor and to present at the 2026 training for poll workers in an effort to promote accessibility and voting access.

Please see the attached photos and data for your reference. dLCV requests a written response by Friday April 17. Once we receive your response we will publish this report and your comments through our website, Social Media and other outlets. As always, dLCV appreciates the collaboration with ELECT and looks forward to a response and your implementation of the above recommendations.

## Photos of Polling Sites



Photo One: Curbside Voting sign is out of the way and faded

New Market Fire and Rescue:  
9771 S. Congress Street



Photo 2: Tent for volunteers is blocking 2 of the 4 accessible parking spots.

New Market Fire and Rescue  
9771 S. Congress Street



Photo 3: Evidence that curbside voting parking is using accessible parking spots. There is also no way of contacting poll workers for curbside voting.

David A. Harrison Elementary School:  
12900 E Quaker Road



Photo 4: No accessible street parking at church in the City of Richmond.  
First Baptist Church, 2709 Monument Avenue



Photo 5: A second site where voters must park on the street and there are no accessible parking signs.

Naomi L. Brooks Elementary School: 600 Russell Road, Alexandria



Photo 6: Curbside voting sign is hard to see in the middle of political signs. The other curbside sign is a tripping hazard and barrier.

Forest Grove Elementary School  
46245 Forest Ridge Dr, Sterling



Photo 7:  
Accessible parking is the closest to the steps but a further walk to the ramp.  
Sterling Middle School, 201 W Holly Ave, Sterling



Photo 8: Curbside voting sign with no phone number. The person who was supposed to watch the door had to use the restroom, and there was no one else to watch the door

North Park Library  
8508 Franconia Rd  
Henrico