

# PUBLIC SUBMISSION

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RFI: Promoting Access to Voting

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Promoting Access To Voting

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## Submitter Information

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## General Comment

- 5. Provide recommendations for improving voter access for people with disabilities.
- 13. Describe barriers that people with disabilities encounter with voting by mail.
- 15. Describe barriers that people with disabilities face at polling locations.
- 19. Describe any barriers that people with disabilities face to voting that disproportionately impact communities of color, persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

I think something to be considered in this conversation is the impact of mood, developmental, and learning disorders, including people with undiagnosed disabilities. Since many people have limited access to healthcare (including therapy), many people with anxiety disorders (especially social anxiety) may experience difficulty or hesitance to vote on Election Day if their state limits early voting / no-excuse absentee voting. The lack of access and stigma surrounding psychological healthcare in general should be viewed as a possible source of voter suppression, as untreated psychological issues can lead to difficulties in planning to vote on time (e.g., as in untreated ADHD), difficulties in accessing transportation and communicating with election workers (e.g., many autistic people have difficulty driving and/or are nonverbal), or a lack of treatment can lead to a lack of motivation to vote altogether (e.g., depression). It should be noted that people of color are often disproportionately underdiagnosed for many disabilities, and the impacts of minority stress can further add to mental health difficulties. On a related note, trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming people (including PoC) also experience higher than average rates of anxiety and other mental health issues, and it must be ensured that they can vote without fear of intimidation or any other mistreatment.

The expansion of voting by mail and early voting times as well as the accessibility of comprehensive healthcare would help to make voting less cumbersome and stressful for people with psychological health struggles. Thank you for reading.