Index 1: Voter Registration - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland offers automatic, online, and same-day (through Election Day) voter registration. The state does not purge voting lists no matter how many years of nonvoting. There was a moderate number of total purges conducted in 2020. Youth can preregister to vote beginning at age 16. Voting rights are automatically restored to those incarcerated for felonies upon release. Maryland was one of the very first states to ban prison gerrymandering in 2010.

Index 2: Voter Identification - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland requires no photo ID to vote. The state is a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) which helps states improve accuracy of voter rolls. Few voters contacted the 1-866-OUR-VOTE legal hotline in 2020 during the last week of the election to report concerns with voter ID requirements or being absent from the voter rolls.

Index 3: Early Voting - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland offers early in-person voting beginning 13 days before Election Day, with Saturday and Sunday hours, ending the Thursday before Election Day. State legislation passed in 2021 expanded early voting hours and locations. Maryland also offers all-mail or no-excuse ballot absentee voting. Maryland tied with Oklahoma for best state in this index.

Index 4: Safe Voting - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland sends notices to all voters the option to request a no-excuse absentee ballot. The application can be completed by mailing the enclosed form or through an online portal. State law in 2021 made permanent most provisions of voting by mail, including robust ballot return options. Maryland provides accessible electronic absentee or vote-by-mail ballots to voters with disabilities, prepaid postage, and the right to apply to be added to the permanent absentee voter list. It does have some restrictions on who can return the ballot on behalf of the voter.
Index 5: Ballot Acceptance - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland had a moderate percentage of mail-in ballots returned in 2020, with a very low rejection rate. The state has a statewide ballot tracking service, but it is not strong nor statutorily required. In 2020, Maryland allowed election administrators to preprocess returned ballots and voters to correct ballots for discrepancies, but legislation mandating this statewide was vetoed by the governor in 2022. The state accepts ballots within 10 days if postmarked no later than Election Day and provides prepaid postage on return envelopes. There is no signature verification program.

Index 6: Logistical Barriers in Voting - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland has declared Election Day to be a state holiday and allows employees to take up to two hours paid leave to vote. The state passed laws in 2021 to help voters with mobility/disability/language challenges, require prisons to provide voting information to everyone who is or has been in a correctional facility, and provides a drop box at Baltimore’s central booking facility. Maryland provides high quality accessible voting machine options and is supportive of college students’ rights to vote. In 2020, the state had a high ratio of poll workers to polling sites and was also rated high for investments made in the 2020 elections to improve processes while being cost effective. Maryland ranked among the five best states in this index.

Index 7: Equipment, Security, and Auditing - Confidence level - HIGH
Maryland has a statewide verified paper audit trail. All voting centers use hand marked paper ballots, offer Ballot Marking Devices for voters with accessibility needs, and test the equipment according to federal standards and accreditation. Maryland uses E Poll Book technology statewide, which helps reduce discrepancies. Its election security systems received very high overall ratings in 2018. The state uses traditional audit methods to double-check for machine recording errors before election certification and during the statutorily required post-election and administrative audits.
Maryland has established the constitutional right to a secret ballot and its election administration is designed to be nonpartisan by nature. 2022 law extends the statute of limitations of the reporting, investigation, and prosecution of certain election crimes and places limitations on litigation to address emergencies by prohibiting polling site closures and other actions.

Public opinion surveys showed that Maryland voters had some trust in the 2020 election news coverage, while political scientists gave the state medium media integrity ratings. Marylanders were targeted with robocalls to stay home and not vote. There were very few reports about voter intimidation or safety at the polling sites. State law requires all poll workers to be trained, criminalizes voter intimidation and false election speech, and authorizes law enforcement to be present at polling sites only by request or on official business. The state has good campaign finance disclosure laws, which were expanded in 2022. Maryland was one of five states to receive a high score in this index.

Maryland is one of 6 states that has a truly split government. It has neither a trifecta – the governor and the legislature are from different parties - nor a triplex – the governor, attorney general, and secretary of state are not from the same political party. Based on the last two presidential elections, Maryland is the 3rd most Democratic-leaning state, with an average Democratic voting margin of 30.3% compared to the national average Democratic voting margin of 3%. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the state’s population grew by 7.0% compared to the national average of 7.4%. Maryland is one of the 9 most racially diverse states in the country. Less than half the population identifies as white, making it the most racially diverse state on the East Coast. With the U.S. Census results, the state will neither gain nor lose any representatives in Congress.