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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARYLAND COURT OF APPEALS RULES EARLY VOTING IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

ANNAPOLIS (August 25, 2006) – Today, the Maryland Court of Appeals upheld a ruling of a Anne Arundel County Circuit Court judge that early voting violates the *Constitution of Maryland*. As a result of this court ruling, any eligible voter who planned on voting during early voting must either vote in his or her assigned polling place on September 12th or vote by absentee ballot.

Voters may find their assigned polling places using the State Board of Elections' new polling place locator at www.elections.state.md.us. In addition to providing the name and address of the voter's assigned polling place, the voter can get driving directions to the polling place. An application for an absentee ballot is also available on the same website. The deadline to request an absentee ballot by mail or by fax is Tuesday, September 5th. After September 5th, all requests for an absentee ballot must be made *in person* at the local board of elections in the county in which the voter resides.

With early voting, Maryland voters could have voted starting September 5th through September 9th at an early voting location in the jurisdiction in which they live. Each jurisdiction had at least one early voting location, with Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George's Counties and Baltimore City having three locations.

On August 11, 2006, Judge Ronald A. Silkworth ruled that early voting, as enacted in Chapter 5 of the 2005 Laws of Maryland (Senate Bill 478) and Chapter 61 of the 2006 Laws of Maryland (House Bill 1368), violated the *Constitution of Maryland*. The State of Maryland immediately appealed Judge Silkworth's ruling to the Maryland Court of Appeals, the State's highest court, and oral arguments were held this morning. The Court's reasons for the decision will be stated in an opinion to be filed at a later date.

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