

BILL: SB 493

CONCERNING: Elections, Ranked-Choice Voting, Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028

POSITION: FAVORABLE

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Hearing Date: March 4, 2024

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB 493

We wish to express our support for SB 493 which would require the use of ranked-choice voting for the US Presidential Primaries in 2028.

We are business people, who live and work in Maryland, united in our concern about the ever deepening political divisions plaguing our communities. As Democrats, Republicans, and independents, we are Americans first, dedicated to supporting non-partisan structural reforms aimed at making our democracy work better.

Our current system of plurality voting isn't working. It fuels the toxicity we see in our elections, a discord that is undermining our democracy and civil society. As voters, because of plurality voting, we often feel our vote is wasted or that we must engage in strategic voting so as to avoid unintentionally benefitting the candidate we like least. And, under our current system, we are dismayed that our elected leaders often secure only a minority of support which both undermines their mandate and fails to reward them for their cooperative and bipartisan work.

Ranked Choice Voting is an election innovation that can address this fault in our system. We support its use in Presidential Primaries as it would:

- encourage civility in elections,
- empower voters to fully use their vote so as to elect leaders with a true mandate of majority support,
- incentivize elected leaders to be consensus builders, and
- broaden the diversity of elected candidates.

We applaud Senator Kagen for undertaking this reform effort. The election innovation enabled by SB 493 is one essential step our state can take to be part of the solution in strengthening our democracy.

We ask that the Education, Energy, and the Environment find this bill favorable.

Respectfully submitted,

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Luz Blancas Sekak, Chevy Chase
Cameron Denton, Baltimore
Michael J. Harper, Silver Spring
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