

My name is Brigitta Mullican
Rockville, Maryland, LD-17 –

March 1, 2024

Please oppose SB 493, Ranked–Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028.

I believe rank-choice voting is too difficult to understand for the average voter, requires education and the purchase of new software, and takes away from more important issues. It is unclear how recounts would happen with this new system. What assurance is there about how the machines will calculate the results?

My main objections to this bill are the costs associated with this unnecessary change to the rank choice voting (RCV) method and the complications of educating the voters about this system. It will require more time for each voter to complete their ballots, especially when there will be so many different candidates' names on the ballot. In Montgomery County, we had 29 candidates on a ballot including races for county executive, county council, judge of the circuit court, State's Attorney, clerk of the circuit court, register of wills, judge of orphans' court, sheriff, and members of the board of education. Imagine how much time it will take to complete a ballot with so many names to rank. Voters will simply not vote using RCV. How will recounts be handled?

In 2019 the fiscal and policy note produced by the Maryland Department of Legislative Services estimated the total 4-year cost of implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for Montgomery County was \$1.8M and we know that cost estimates for legislation are routinely underestimated. We can use that money for better priorities. Why allow a waste of county money on something not needed when we have more pressing issues? This change would also require reprogramming the State BOE procedures and rewriting all the instructions.

Rank choice voting is confusing and will require the voter to spend more time to complete a complex ballot. As a former chief election judge, I regularly saw voters come to the polls unprepared and required help. This alternative method will likely compound exponentially. It will also frustrate the voters.

Is RCV a fair way to conduct an election? NO. Is this likely to confuse the voter? YES.

I believe **RCV** could keep voters from voting and only those who understand the system will be the only ones voting. This kind of change could undermine voter confidence.

Many voters cite very strong concerns. Our local electoral system has more pressing concerns. Fewer regular voters have asked for Rank Choice Voting methods. Keep what works.

Please oppose SB-493 and keep our voting less complicated.

Thank you.