



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0493
Elections – Ranked Choice Voting
Contests for Presidential Nomination in 2028**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition
Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0493 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our Coalition agrees with Get Money Out–Maryland (GMOM), an all-volunteer force seeking to get big money out of our political system and make elections fairer. GMOM has determined that by requiring a majority of votes cast to win public office – rather than the current system, in which a winner may have only a plurality – ranked choice voting might help build support for officeholders.

Ranked choice voting has been used for state primary, congressional, and presidential elections in Alaska and Maine. San Francisco’s experience suggests that ranked choice voting can enhance public engagement.

According to GMOM, the current election system often prevents voters from choosing their preferred candidate for fear of “splitting the vote” among those who generally support the same ideology and policies, and thus allowing a candidate they oppose to win the race. Ranked choice voting could reduce this “spoiler” effect. It would also give candidates an incentive to avoid negative campaigning. Instead of bashing an opponent, a candidate would be more inclined to court that opponent’s supporters in hopes of garnering their second-choice votes.

In addition to helping to get great bills like SB0493 passed, MLC’s mission is to inform voters about such legislation and their legislators. We would like to see our efforts enhanced by the benefits of ranked-choice voting.

Therefore, we support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.