



The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Atterbeary and Members of the House Ways & Means Committee:

The Center for Election Science, a leader in the implementation of approval voting, would like to express its support of **House Bill 423: Montgomery County – Voting Methods MC 1–24**. The measure would allow the citizens of Montgomery County to potentially utilize approval voting in local races. We thank the Montgomery County Delegation for presenting the measure.

Founded in 2011, the Center for Election Science (CES) is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit focused on voting reform. Like CES, the main goal of this legislation is to empower people with voting methods that strengthen democracy. By implementing approval voting, which allows voters to pick all of the candidates they like on their ballot, Montgomery County citizens will be able to more clearly and effectively express their support for candidates who truly represent their communities.

If implemented, the citizens of Montgomery County will join the communities of Fargo, ND and St. Louis, MO, in achieving a stronger voice for their communities by simply approving the elected leaders in which they can place their trust. What we have learned from the grassroots efforts in each of these communities is that approval voting is easy to implement, it is easy to tally, and easy to audit. Therefore, it achieves the delegation's laudable goal without placing undue burden on the administrators who run our elections. Most importantly, after multiple cycles utilizing approval voting, polling shows that voters favor it. In fact, sixty percent of St. Louis voters would like to see approval voting expanded to elect other officials as well.

Through this legislative request, Montgomery County's delegation is seeking to help voters select representatives who truly reflect their values and those of their community, while creating an environment where more voices and fresh perspectives can be heard and considered. As we have done in other communities, we look forward to supporting Montgomery County's Delegation in bringing this important voting method to its residents.

For more information on the Center for Election Science's work on approval voting, please visit: electionscience.org.

Sincerely,

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