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February 6, 2024

Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **Request for Favorable Report HB0412**, General Assembly - Special Elections to Fill a Vacancy in Office

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on H0B412. I am providing this testimony in my personal capacity as a Maryland resident. Although I am a member of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, the opinions expressed herein do not reflect the opinions of other Central Committee members; they are mine alone.

Elections are the cornerstone of a democracy which in turn is the source of our freedom as Americans. Vacancies in office are inevitable, especially during the transition from one party holding the Governorship to another party. Maryland is not unique in that regard. Members of Congress often resign to accept positions in the administration of a new President.

As a member of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee (MCDCC), I participated in the process of selecting nominees to fill legislative vacancies. I can personally attest to the fact that all of my colleagues took the responsibility seriously and invested significant time to get to know the applicants. While the Central Committee selected outstanding public servants to fill vacancies in the General Assembly over the past year, our democratic ideals and desire to empower citizens dictate replacement of the appointment system with special elections.

I am a strong supporter of special elections because the best way to fill vacancies is through elections. There are other bills pending before the General Assembly that reform the process for filling vacancies and all of them are an improvement over the current appointment process. I would support enactment of any of them. I note that by requiring an initial Central Committee recommendation followed by a special election in the "Presidential election year" HB0412 strikes a good balance between filling

vacancies quickly with ensuring a special election is held. Conducting a special election during the "Presidential election year" also minimizes the cost of holding a special election.

I want to thank Delegate Foley for her leadership on this issue and urge the Committee to favorably report HB0412.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jayson Spiegel". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Jayson L. Spiegel
Gaithersburg, Maryland