

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill SB0005
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Date: January 19, 2026

Submitted by: Liza Smith, Member, Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee (District 14)

To the Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee:

My name is **Liza Smith**, and I am a member of the **Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee**, representing **District 14**. I strongly support **Senate Bill SB0005**, which would require **special elections** to fill vacancies in the Maryland General Assembly.

Democracy only works when the people have the power to choose their representatives. Yet in Maryland, when a seat becomes vacant, that power is taken away from voters and handed to a small group behind closed doors.

When Delegate **Jazz Lewis** stepped down in **January 2026**, the people of **District 24** were completely shut out. Party insiders picked a replacement, the Governor rubber-stamped it, and voters never got a voice. The same thing happened in **District 27A**, which spans **Prince George's and Charles Counties**. Marylanders were ignored, and our democracy was silenced.

While this was happening in Maryland, **Virginia was holding special elections**—giving voters the chance to elect, not select, their representatives. Our neighbors trusted the people. We did not.

This isn't just about process. It's about **representation, trust, and fairness**. Thousands of residents never had the chance to choose who speaks for them in Annapolis. Their voices were replaced by appointments.

Maryland now stands alone in the Mid-Atlantic. **Twenty-five states** hold special elections for legislative vacancies. We do not. Special elections are more democratic, more transparent, and more accountable. They invite new voices, real competition, and public participation.

Holding special elections alongside regular primaries and general elections would save money, reduce delays, and—most importantly—restore faith in our democracy.

It is unacceptable that while neighboring states trust their citizens with the vote, Maryland continues to deny that same right. Our residents deserve better.

I urge the Committee to stand with Maryland voters—not political insiders. Support **SB0005**. Let the people choose. Let democracy work the way it was meant to.

Respectfully submitted,
Liza Smith
Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee
District 14