



**TESTIMONY FOR
SB0005 – General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office**

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

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0005 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

SB0005 strengthens Maryland’s commitment to representative democracy by ensuring that vacancies in the General Assembly are filled through a transparent, timely, and voter-centered process. Under current law, appointments to fill legislative vacancies are made by central committees, which can leave constituents without a direct voice in selecting their new representative. In an era when trust in government is fragile, Marylanders deserve a process that maximizes public participation and reinforces confidence in the legitimacy of their elected officials.

This bill establishes a clear and orderly process to ensure that when a General Assembly seat is initially filled by appointment, voters have the opportunity to elect a permanent replacement during the next regular statewide election—as long as the vacancy occurs early enough in the term to allow meaningful voter participation. By aligning the special election timeline with existing election administration deadlines, SB0005 enables the State Board of Elections to conduct these elections efficiently and without unnecessary cost. The bill also maintains the option for temporary appointments when needed, while ultimately ensuring that voters—not party committees—decide who represents them in Annapolis.

For the Maryland Legislative Coalition, whose mission is to inform and empower voters, SB0005 is a commonsense reform that strengthens democratic accountability. When constituents have the opportunity to select their own legislators, it enhances public trust, improves responsiveness, and ensures that every district has a representative chosen by the people they serve.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on SB0005.