



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Senate Bill 0005—Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office**

**Education, Energy and the Environment Committee – January 21, 2026**

**SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of SB005. We support this bill because it will increase the number of legislators elected by citizens of their district. In Montgomery County, 29% of current Delegates (5) and Senators (1) were first appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of a partisan central committee.

The current appointment process is undemocratic and unacceptable. Appointment confers unfair electoral advantages in stature, communications, and fundraising on the office-holding appointee that no challenger will possess. In Montgomery County, that advantage is conferred by a vote of 25 Central Committee members, only two of whom are guaranteed to live in the district of the Delegate or Senator who is appointed. In some cases, citizens are deprived of their right to vote for their legislators for almost four years.

Some ask about “cost” and “inconvenience.” Such factors do not justify removing the franchise from voters. With the widespread use of mail-in voting, special elections can be held far more easily and with less cost and inconvenience than might have been the case even a few years ago. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states respect that open and fair elections are the bedrock of democracy and fill their legislative vacancies with special elections. It is time for Maryland to join them.

**We ask for your support for SB0005 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.**

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC President

Kate Stein  
WDC Advocacy  
Chair

Dorothy Manevich  
WDC Advancing  
Democracy  
Subcommittee

Lynn Olsen  
WDC Advancing  
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