



Testimony of Montgomery County Young Democrats in Support of HB 103-Special Elections Bill

Chair Kaiser and members of the Committee:

Thank you for hearing our testimony. My name is Michael DeLong and I am the President of the Montgomery County Young Democrats, a group of young Democrats ages 14-34 who work to make Montgomery County and Maryland a better place for everyone and to promote freedom and justice for all. We are here to support HB 103, a constitutional amendment sponsored by Delegate David Moon to require special elections to fill legislative vacancies if they occur on or before a certain date.

HB 103 is bipartisan and would require legislative vacancies that occur at least twenty one days before a presidential election deadline to be filled by a special election. An appointee would still serve in that position until then, but a special primary and a special general election for the legislative seat would happen at the same time as the presidential election. If the legislative seat opens up in the second half of a legislative term, it will be filled by the current appointment process until the next regular election.

This bill will make our state government more democratic and promote increased accountability to the voters. While appointments to legislative seats can help some candidates, they also can lead to charges of cronyism. And it means voters aren't very involved in choosing their representatives. It is important that voters have a voice in choosing legislators. People should be able to learn about and determine their state representatives, and this proposal will uphold integrity and transparency in our elections.

Recently there was a controversy in Baltimore County where the Baltimore City Democratic Central Committee appointed one of their own members to a vacant seat, and one of the members cast the tie-breaking vote for herself. HB 103 will help ensure a better process and promote intra party democracy.

New and diverse candidates should also be encouraged to run for office-we need a legislature that represents and looks like Maryland. This bill will promote that by providing communities and grassroots leaders with more opportunities for involvement in the political process.

Committees can and do appoint excellent people, but elections are more democratic and should be the default way of choosing legislators.

We urge the Committee to vote for and favorably report HB 103. Thank you for your time. If you have questions, we can be reached at mocoyoungdems@gmail.com.

Contact:

Michael DeLong

925-708-1135

Michaeldelong94@gmail.com

President

Montgomery County Young Democrats