

January 29, 2020

**Testimony on HB 103**  
**General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office**  
**Ways and Means**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 103, which would require a special primary and special election at the same time as regular primaries and elections to fill seats vacated by members of the Maryland State Senate or House of Delegates.

Currently, in the event of a vacancy in the General Assembly, the Governor may appoint their replacement who may then fill that office for the duration of the office's term. While this can be an adequate solution in some situations, in others, it results in legislators filling nearly an entire term without giving their constituents a real say in the process.

HB 103 would change this, requiring that special elections be held to fill these vacated seats. This bill would provide for true democratic participation by giving citizens a greater voice in choosing who represents them when these vacancies occur. This bill would also create greater consistency between the process for replacing a vacancy for a Representative seat and a Senate vacancy.

Additionally, HB 103 would do this by holding special elections that occur at the same time as regular elections, ensuring maximum awareness of and turnout for the elections.

HB 103 is a straightforward bill, returning power to Maryland citizens in the event of a vacancy by one of their popularly elected officials. As such, we urge a favorable report.