

**Testimony of Sharon Brackett**

Elected Member - Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee for D46

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House Ways and Means , 18 Feb 2020

Regarding HB873 - Election Law – Party and Public Offices – Prohibitions

Chair Kaiser,

My name is Sharon Brackett and I appear before you in support of HB873. I am an elected member of the Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee for District 46, being the first trans person elected to any office in the State of Maryland.

In my time on the Central Committee I have been mystified by an incestuous practice of elected officials serving as members of the Central Committee while holding public office. When I have asked about why this is so, the answer has been “We have always allowed it”. My experience tells me that is usually the weakest of arguments for any policy or procedure.

There are many persons interested in serving their party but who will not bother to run for Central Committee if they will find themselves running “against” their councilperson, delegate, or senator. These elected officials have enough power in the party already and should be prepared to step aside once elected and let some “new blood” have the opportunity to serve.

This “practice” smacks of old school political machine politics at its worst, and effectively creates an environment for incumbents to leverage their position with the Central Committee to propagate their own terms and influence resources and manpower with a body that should remain neutral until primaries are settled. Given the recent spate of corruption in Baltimore City I would think any effort that improves transparency and openness is a step forward.

I hope you will report out this bill with a favorable opinion.

Regards.

Sharon Brackett