



BILL: HB0053

BILL TITLE: Election Law - Voting Rights - Imprisoned Felons

BILL SPONSOR: Delegate Ivey

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: FAVORABLE

January 26, 2021

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB0053

Cristi Demnowicz
Represent Maryland

Represent Maryland is a grassroots, pro-Democracy group of ordinary citizens. Voting represents one of the primary tenets of democratic governance. It is one of most basic rights as members of such a society. We believe that to be a true democracy every adult citizen must have fair and equitable access to the ballot box. For this reason, Represent Maryland strongly supports HB0053, which would restore the right to vote to those convicted of a felony and currently imprisoned. No matter what anyone thinks of this population, they are members of a democratic society, thus they should have the right to vote.

Opponents of this right and other forms of voter suppression often point to exceptions, such as serial killers and other violent offenders, however the truth is that most imprisoned felons, both state and nationwide, are incarcerated for low-level crimes. In addition, a disproportionate number of this population are black men, due to a racist criminal justice system that targets them.

Represent Maryland believes in making voting accessible to all. HB0053 aligns with this goal, and we ask you to find it favorable.

Sincerely,
Cristi Demnowicz
Chair
Represent Maryland
Maryland Voter-D7

Represent Maryland is a grassroots anti-corruption group of citizen advocates that #FightForDemocracy in Maryland. Our democracy solutions include: Public Election Funds, Independent Redistricting, Special Elections, Ranked Choice Voting, Increased Ethics and Transparency, and Increased Voter Participation.

Cristi@RepresentMaryland.org

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miller, Treasurer
www.RepresentMaryland.org