



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

EVAN GLASS
COUNCILMEMBER
AT-LARGE

TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE;
LEAD FOR HOMELESSNESS AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building, Room 131
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Position: Support for House Bill 767 – *Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 22-21*

Chair Kaiser:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony and for your leadership on electoral issues statewide.

The ability to enact voting reforms that will increase civic participation and more accurately communicate voter sentiment are important components of a functioning democracy. New voting methods, such as ranked choice voting and affirmative voting, are voting processes that will allow voters to express their political sentiment in more thoughtful and deliberate ways. The 2020 elections showed how impactful access to the ballot box can be; elections across the nation were sometimes decided by fewer than a hundred votes.

Local government serves as an incubator for new ideas and we must work hard to innovate and make our democracy accessible to all voters. Providing counties with the flexibility to implement new voting methods ensures that the will of the voters is heard. Maryland jurisdictions have recently moved forward with successful reforms like public financing, which in the case of Montgomery County, facilitated grassroots campaigns for dozens of candidates. As Montgomery County's demographics continue to shift, we need to ensure that voters and candidates of all backgrounds have the support they need to exercise their democratic right to vote – and run for office. Now is the time to pass reforms that best convey the intention of voters.

I urge the Committee to allow county governments the ability to implement 21st-century approaches to voting methods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Evan Glass".

Evan Glass
Councilmember, At-Large

cc: Members of the Ways and Means Committee