

Thank you to the Ways and Means Committee for this opportunity to provide my witness in favor of HB0767.

I am a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland, so this bill personally affects me.

I strongly support ranked choice voting, and believe it should be more broadly implemented across the county and even the whole of Maryland, and believe that HB0767 is a good step towards more election reform and a more robust Democracy.

As we have seen recently, political divisions are devastating our country, our communities, and our Democracy. A ranked choice voting (RCV) creates an environment more focused on the issues and debate and not partisanship where one only needs to play to one's base and stoke negative partisanship. RCV creates an environment where all candidates need to make their case to all voters because all of the voters are ranking their preferences among all the candidates. A candidate running a successful campaign in an RCV election must appeal to voters across the board. I believe that this kind of Democracy is the kind of environment we need. Where people don't yell past each other or seek to cast whole groups of people as evil. Implementing RCV in Montgomery County will help develop a more robust Democracy and hopefully serve as a model to other communities to reform their elections.

I have heard some express concern that RCV is too complicated and that people will be confused by the system. Certainly there will be a need for voter education--just as there is with elections now--, but I actually vote using RCV regularly in my job now and it works great.

I am a faculty librarian at a university library which along with the university as a whole, practises "shared governance," meaning our library faculty and staff elect representatives and leadership who works alongside the traditional hierarchy of managers, supervisors, and administrators. We use RCV for all our elections. Our faculty use RCV to elect representatives to the University Senate; our staff and graduate assistants use RCV to elect representatives to the Library Assembly; and we all use RCV to elect a President of Library Assembly. The personnel at the library represent a diverse group of socio-economic statuses and education levels. I believe if the faculty, staff, and students at my library can run, organize, and vote using RCV, Montgomery County and its voters--not to mention the state--can too.

Thank you again for this opportunity and I hope you too will support HB0767 and work towards a better Democracy in my county and across our state.

Thank you again,
Benjamin Bradley
Silver Spring, MD