



TESTIMONY FOR HB0761 ELECTION LAW – CONTESTED ELECTIONS

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Kaiser

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0761 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members have certainly had their eyes opened about contested elections after the 2020 election cycle. We support the valid results of any election, and when an election result is too close to easily call, we respect the right of both parties to contest and demand a full recount. However, there have to be limits. We like the fact that this bill will set a 5% limit on the difference between the count of the winner and the count of the loser as the minimum for demanding a recount.

The same is true for ballot petitions. A 5% limit between the votes for the ballot measure and the votes against would be the minimum for requesting a recount.

The bill also sets limits around a candidate establishing a Contested Election entity or fund for the purpose of receiving contributions and making payments related to filing for a recount. And, while we feel that this is a lot of legislative framework around the process of contested elections, 2020 showed us that we don't really have a good framework for the level of contested elections we saw then, or the possibility of what we will see in the future.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.