



## Testimony of Montgomery County Young Democrats to Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee in Support of SB 73: Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

Esteemed Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

We, the Montgomery County Young Democrats (or "MCYD"), are writing to express our support for Senator Clarence Lam's bill, SB 73: Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office. MCYD is an organization that offers a voice for young people—those between the ages of 14–35 who live, work, or go to school in Montgomery County—who seek progressive change in order to secure a just and stable future for all of the county's residents. We strive to educate and motivate our peers to become involved in the political process through strong, progressive candidates and policies.

Maryland's current system in which local political party insiders choose individuals to fill legislative vacancies has taken too much power away from the voters. Over the past several years, political party central committees—both Democratic and Republican—have quietly wielded so much power that more than 20 percent of Maryland state legislators were initially appointed by these committees rather than elected by the voters. The process as it stands empowers central committee insiders with choices that voters should make—choices that voters make in many other states. In fact, Maryland is the only state with four-year State House terms other than North Dakota that relies on this political party insider appointment process.

Because SB 73 calls for special primary and general elections that must take place during the regular statewide primary and general elections that occur in the second year of a term, these special elections would (1) not affect state or local revenues, according to the bill's [Fiscal and Policy Note](#), and (2) empower voters when turnout is high. Although young people vote at lower rates than the electorate as a whole, young people are more likely to vote in the second year of a term, since those are presidential election years. Midterm elections, on the other hand, consistently experience lower turnout than presidential elections.

Can you imagine the public pushback if 20 percent of our U.S. House of Representatives were appointed rather than elected? People between 18 and 34 are less [likely](#) to have faith in our political system. A system like Maryland's in which power is given to a handful of political insiders to handpick 20 percent of our legislators does not inspire us to believe that our system is as fair as it should be.

Thank you very much, and please contact us at [mocoyoungdems@gmail.com](mailto:mocoyoungdems@gmail.com) if you have any questions.