

TESTIMONY TO THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 380 - Montgomery County Board of Education – Election of Members – MC 04-22

POSITION: Support

BY: Nancy Bliss and Vicky Strella – Co-Presidents

Date: February 10, 2022

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) supports HB 380, which requires that members of the Montgomery County Board of Education who are representing a particular district must reside in that district and be elected by a plurality of voters who reside in that district.

This is a welcome and needed change from the current practice of allowing all seven members of the Board of Education (two at large members and five district members) to be elected by all of the voters in Montgomery County.

- Allowing all the voters in the county to vote for district members dilutes the votes of voters in the individual districts and could result in the election of a district member who did not receive a plurality of votes from that district.
- In 1985 a similar situation in Dorchester County was challenged in the federal courts as a violation of the Voting Rights Act and forced a change in the Maryland Constitution.

We ask that the Ways and Means Committee approve this bill to require that district voting for Board of Education members be restricted to those who will be represented in that district in Montgomery County. The League of Women Voters supports standards that not only protect the right of all citizens to vote but also encourage all citizens to vote.

We support standards that promote fair and effective representation.

We urge a favorable report on HB380.

Thank you.