

**Date: December 13, 2021**

**MC 4-22**

**TESTIMONY TO THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DELEGATION**

**Montgomery County – Board of Education – Election of Members - MC 4-22**

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Nancy Bliss and Vicky Strella – Co-Presidents**

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) supports MC 4-22, which requires members of the Montgomery County Board of Education who are designated as representing a district to 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 where all seven members of the Board of Education (two At Large members and five District members) are each elected by all of the voters in Montgomery County.

- Allowing all voters in the county to vote for District members dilutes the votes of voters in the District 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.

[HB655](#) was introduced in the 2021 General Assembly to require district voting of County Commissioners in four counties in which District Commissioners are elected by all voters in the county. The bill was amended to include Boards of Education in six counties – Montgomery being one of them – in which District Board of Education members are elected by all voters in the county.

- Our state League, the League of Women Voters of Maryland, testified in support of that legislation. The bill did not pass but is expected to be re-introduced in 2022.

We are pleased that the Montgomery County Delegation is taking proactive action by introducing MC 4-22 to require district voting for Board of Education members who represent a district in Montgomery County, should the broader legislation referenced above again not pass.

The League of Women Voters supports standards that not only protect the right of all citizens to vote but also encourages all citizens to vote. We support standards that promote fair and effective representation. We support MC 4-22.