



March 12, 2023

Dear Chairman Senator Feldman, Vice Chairman Senator Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Quaker Voice of Maryland is submitting this testimony in FAVOR of SB0878 – *Voting Rights Act of 2023 - Counties and Municipalities.*

We have identified this bill as one of our priorities for the 2023 general assembly because Quakers across Maryland have shared their concern about voting access and protection. One of the testimonies of Quakerism is equality and we see the Maryland Voting Rights Act as striving to support equality in participation to the state political process.

This is because the “Maryland Voting Rights Act will provide a means of ensuring that all voters are able to cast a meaningful ballot, but it will especially help to accelerate the participation of voters of color who have been historically denied an equal opportunity to participate in the political process” (ACLU Fact Sheet, link provided below). Some highlights of this bill for us include:

- Creating strong protections against voter intimidation, deception, or obstruction.
- Launching a “preclearance” program that requires places with records of discrimination to prove that proposed voting changes will not harm voters of color before they can go into effect.
- Providing new legal tools to fight discriminatory voting rules and election systems in court.

In addition to submitting hearing testimony in support of this bill we have signed on to a letter being organized by Common Cause Maryland and have joined over 20 organizations to urge SUPPORT for this bill.

To learn more about the issue and how passing this legislation will lead to positive change for Marylanders who have historically been denied an equal opportunity to participate in the political process I recommend you read the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU-MD) bill fact sheet:

https://www.aclu-md.org/sites/default/files/votingrights_onepager_mdga23.pdf

We encourage a FAVORABLE report for this essential legislation.

Sincerely,

Molly Finch

Working Group Member, on behalf of Quaker Voice of Maryland

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