



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 417 General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

POSITION: Favorable

BY: Nancy Soreng, President

Date: February 14, 2023

The League of Women Voters of Maryland supports House Bill 417, requiring that a special election be held at the same time as the regular statewide primary and general elections in the second year of the term to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly, if the vacancy occurs on or before the date that is 55 days before the deadline for filing certificates of for the regular statewide election.

Since 1985, the League of Women Voters of Maryland has supported the use of special elections to fill vacancies in the office of Senator or Delegate. We strongly believe that legislative representatives should be selected by their constituents rather than potentially serve nearly a full four-year term based on appointment by the Governor. We're pleased that HB 417 would establish a uniform requirement for special elections across all state jurisdictions.

The League also supports additional actions to improve the transparency of filling legislative vacancies, including statewide standards regulating the central committee nominating process, public notice of meetings within the vacated district for constituent input, the public announcement of candidates prior to that meeting, and a publicly recorded vote of each committee member.

The LWVMD strongly urges a favorable report on HB 417.