

Testimony

Ways and Means Committee
February 7, 2023
Montgomery County - Voting Methods

Name: Laurie Halverson (8812 Harness Trail, Potomac MC 20854) District 15
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Position: Strongly Oppose

“RCV is like determining the winner of the basketball game, not based on the end score, but on the number of minutes a team was ahead.”

The Montgomery County Federation of Republican Women strongly oppose HB0344.

Not Cost Effective: According to the fiscal notes, RCV would add expenditures of at least \$1.2 million and approval voting would add \$597,000. I’m not sure why the estimations have gone down since last year’s fiscal notes for this bill. Because of inflation, I question if these amounts are accurate.

The bill is too vague: The bill does not explain whether RCV would occur in the Primary, General Election or both. It doesn’t describe how the County Council can determine whether to use RCV or Approval Voting, leaving the Council enormous latitude in its application. Would the County Executive have veto rights? Would there be hearings on the issue before a decision is made? How would RCV work when there are multiple positions for one office, such as County Council at-large or the Circuit Court Judge positions? Will they choose to use it in certain cases to increase their own personal chances of winning? If you pass this bill, you are handing over political power that may not necessarily be in the best interest of voters.

It disenfranchises voters: Voters who want to support an unpopular candidate would be less likely to turn out to vote, knowing their first place vote would be thrown away.

The current system isn’t broken: There is nothing wrong with the winner of the election being the one with the most votes. RCV is like determining the winner of the basketball game, not based on the end score, but on the number of minutes a team was ahead. Who says there must be a majority vote to win?

Takes more time to determine the winner: It adds more complication to the process of counting votes when it already takes months to finalize the votes in an election. What used to take one day to determine the winner is turning into a circus. Don't you find it odd that we live in a world where it takes one day to get an Amazon delivery while it now takes more than a month sometimes to determine the winner of an election?

Too complicated to understand: Many of our county's voters don't speak English as their first language, which adds to the complexity of the situation. When our delegation previously added an amendment to the bill to include an education component, it proves my point. Is this really where you want to spend your timed attention?

The women of MCFRW would rather you instead support the voter ID bill you have before you.