



**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK,
MARYLAND**

**HB 334
Support**

Ways and Means Committee

February 7, 2023

**HB 334: Voting Systems - Ranked Choice Voting and Inclusion of City
of Takoma Park Municipal Elections on the State Ballot MC 7-23
City Council of the City of Takoma Park**

The City of Takoma Park supports House Bill 334, and urges favorable consideration.

Takoma Park elections are non-partisan, and no primary elections are held. We have around 11,500 active registered voters

The City of Takoma Park has used a ranked-choice voting system for regular and special municipal elections since 2007. When marking a Takoma Park ballot, voters have the opportunity to rank candidates in order of preference. A candidate needs a majority of first-choice votes to be elected. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest first choice votes is eliminated. If those ballots indicate a second choice, the votes are transferred to the voter's second choice. This continues until a candidate receives a majority.

The City Board of Elections has used a variety of ballot counting methods over the years, including hand counts, tabulation of voter scanned ballots (similar to the system used by Maryland voters in state and federal elections), and bulk scanning and tabulating of ballots after an election. Scanned ballots are tabulated by proprietary or open-source software using the cast vote record created by the scanner. Once all ballots are scanned, ranked-choice voting results can be generated quickly.

The City of Takoma Park would welcome the opportunity to make a request to the State Board to have City elections included on the State ballot while maintaining our ability to use ranked-choice voting in City elections. Whether or not the City's elections are on the State ballot, having available voting equipment that is capable of tabulating ballots cast in a ranked-choice voting election, without the need for modification or upgrade, would benefit the City of Takoma Park and any other jurisdiction that adopts ranked-choice voting for its elections.

In sum, the City of Takoma Park supports the goals and intent of this bill, and encourages a favorable vote.