

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1104
VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 2023 – COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES**

FAVORABLE

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Daniel Golombek

My name is Daniel Golombek. I am a resident of District 11B. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1104.

HB 1104 seeks to protect equal access to the ballot – the most fundamental principle upon which our state and our nation are based. I support the thesis of the bill that classes of voters need to be protected because history provides undeniably clear evidence of past discrimination against certain communities that traditionally have faced obstacles to voting, running for office, and electing candidates of their choice.

Furthermore, HB 1104's statistical approach to elections for local offices would counter possible attempts by local governments to disempower protected classes of voters, it provides a useful compendium of possible remedies for the Court and Civil Rights Division to employ, and the pre-clearance mechanism in the bill has been shown to work to alleviate severe discrimination against a protected class in voting.

Creating an Election Database and Information Office would be a positive step toward objective evaluation of local government actions regarding voting rights and political equity. HB 1104 is landmark legislation that contains a toolkit of proactive provisions to ensure that voting rights and political equality are protected throughout the State of Maryland.

I strongly urge a favorable report on HB 1104.

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