

SB913 - NYU Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Cramer Wagner

Position: FAV

New York University
A private university in the public service

STEVEN J. BRAMS
Professor of Politics



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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am Professor of Politics at New York University and author of three books in which approval voting (AV) and its applications are analyzed and compared with other voting systems: (1) *The Presidential Election Game*, (2) *Approval Voting*, and (3) *Mathematics and Democracy: Designing Better Voting and Fair-Division Systems*. For more on my writing and research, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Brams.

I consider AV the simplest and most practical of all voting systems. It is also theoretically the most robust, not vulnerable to paradoxes that ranking systems—notably, ranked choice voting (RCV)—are. Although RCV has been adopted in several cities and two states, it has also been repealed in many, wherein the winners were not majority choices—they would have been beaten in one-on-one contest by one or more of their opponents. RCV is also opaque—many voters do not understand the consequences of their choices under it and make mistakes in filling out their ballots.

By contrast, AV has been successfully used in St. Louis, MO, and Fargo, ND, wherein it has elected broad, consensus candidates. For decades it has been used in academic and professional societies (the two major mathematics associations in the United States, each with about 30,000 members) and by the College of Cardinals to elect popes since the 13th century.

I enthusiastically urge you to enact approval voting in Maryland.

Sincerely yours,

Steven J. Brams

Testimony - SB 913 - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Cramer Wagner

Position: FAV



The Honorable Brian Feldman
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

The Center for Election Science, a leader in the implementation of approval voting, would like to express its support of **Senate Bill 913: Election Law - Approval Voting - Authorization for County Elections**. The measure would allow the citizens of throughout the state the ability, if authorized, to utilize approval voting in local races. We thank the Senator Mike McKay for presenting the measure.

Founded in 2011, the Center for Election Science (CES) is a national, nonpartisan nonprofit focused on voting reform. Like CES, the main goal of this legislation is to empower people with voting methods that strengthen democracy. By implementing approval voting, which allows voters to pick all of the candidates they like on their ballot, citizens will be able to more clearly and effectively express their support for candidates who truly represent their communities.

If implemented, the citizens of Montgomery County will join the communities of Fargo, ND and St. Louis, MO, in achieving a stronger voice for their communities by simply approving the elected leaders in which they can place their trust. What we have learned from the grassroots efforts in each of these communities is that approval voting is easy to implement, it is easy to tally, and easy to audit. Therefore, it achieves the delegation's laudable goal without placing undue burden on the administrators who run our elections. Most importantly, after multiple cycles utilizing approval voting, polling shows that voters favor it. In fact, sixty percent of St. Louis voters would like to see approval voting expanded to elect other officials as well.

Through this legislative request, voters will have the ability to select representatives who truly reflect their values and those of their community, while creating an environment where more voices and fresh perspectives can be heard and considered. As we have done in other communities, we look forward to supporting this effort in bringing this important voting method to its residents.

For more information on the Center for Election Science's work on approval voting, please visit: electionscience.org.

Sincerely,

Nina Taylor, MA
Chief Executive Officer
Center for Election Science
Nina@electionscience.org

Michael Piel
Director of Philanthropy
Center for Election Science
Mike@electionscience.org

Approval voting QR Code Slide.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

Bringing Approval Voting to Maryland

Try Approval Voting

- **It's simple:** pick-all the candidates you like
- **It's transparent:** You see all your choices in the results
- **It's clear** about the full extent of support for each candidate



Approval Voting is Easy to Implement

“

On the ancient machines
we had in St. Louis,
approval voting ran with
zero problems. It's
compatible with GEMS,
and it works with a mixed
ballot

Ben Borgmeyer,
Democratic Director, St.
Louis Board of Elections
Commissioners

”

Approval Voting Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

SB 913 - Election Law - Approval Voting - Authorization for County Elections

(Don't forget the slide)

Good Afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee -

I am here to present, Senate Bill 913 - a measure giving counties the ability to, should they wish to do so, adopt approval voting.

Approval voting has been implemented in a number of municipal elections throughout the nation, as you'll hear from this panel today.

Approval voting is not rank choice voting. **In fact, there is a QR code on the screen now that, should you choose to do so, you can see how easy approval voting can be.**

From those who implemented this voting method reform, they have found that this method is intuitive for voters, simple to administer, transparent about how the winner was determined, and clear about the full extent of support for each candidate.

Again, this is authorizing legislation that gives each county the ability to implement this voting method should it desire to do so. As such, I believe this is worthy for this committee's consideration and I am glad to be joined by a panel who will answer any technical questions that you may have, and I urge a favorable report of this bill.

SB913.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



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Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senate Bill 913 – Election Law – Approval Voting – Authorization for County Elections

February 20, 2024

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

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 913 – Election Law – Approval Voting – Authorization for County Elections. This is an interesting bill that will provide citizens throughout Maryland the ability to utilize approval voting in local races. This will mirror St. Louis, Missouri and Fargo, North Dakota so that Maryland communities have their voices heard in a unique way.

Thank you all very much for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike McKay".

Senator Mike McKay

Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland

Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

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Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV



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Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
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If implemented, the citizens of Montgomery County will join the communities of Fargo, ND and St. Louis, MO, in achieving a stronger voice for their communities by simply approving the elected leaders in which they can place their trust. What we have learned from the grassroots efforts in each of these communities is that approval voting is easy to implement, it is easy to tally, and easy to audit. Therefore, it achieves the delegation's laudable goal without placing undue burden on the administrators who run our elections. Most importantly, after multiple cycles utilizing approval voting, polling shows that voters favor it. In fact, sixty percent of St. Louis voters would like to see approval voting expanded to elect other officials as well.

Through this legislative request, voters will have the ability to select representatives who truly reflect their values and those of their community, while creating an environment where more voices and fresh perspectives can be heard and considered. As we have done in other communities, we look forward to supporting this effort in bringing this important voting method to its residents.

For more information on the Center for Election Science's work on approval voting, please visit: electionscience.org.

Sincerely,

Nina Taylor, MA
Chief Executive Officer
Center for Election Science
Nina@electionscience.org

Michael Piel
Director of Philanthropy
Center for Election Science
Mike@electionscience.org

Tibbals_ SB 913_ Election Law - Approval Voting -

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: FAV

**SB 913: Election Law - Approval Voting - Authorization for County Elections:
Please SUPPORT this bill!!**

Dear Education, Energy and Environment Committee Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan
and all other esteemed Committee Members:

Please vote to SUPPORT this bill!!

This is a common sense bill that legitimizes voting the way it should be:

“APPROVAL VOTING” MEANS A METHOD OF 2 CASTING AND TABULATING
VOTES IN WHICH VOTERS MAY CHOOSE ANY NUMBER OF 3 CANDIDATES AND
THE CANDIDATE CHOSEN MOST OFTEN IS ELECTED.

With all candidates being equal, the candidate that is chosen “most often” is elected.
Any other method of voting is not only confusing for the voters but would be open to
misinterpretation and, therefore, would be open to voters not voting the way they
intended to vote for candidates.

“Approval voting” is the only common sense choice of voting to select. It is easier for
the voters, and it would be easier to tabulate the correct voting choices of each voter.

Thank you for your courtesy and cooperation in SUPPORTING this bill!!

Trudy Tibbals
A Concerned Mother and Maryland resident

2024 SB0913 Testimony against 2024-02-21.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against SB0913

Please vote against SB0913.

This bill is even worse than ranked voting. It does not explain how it would work and the sponsor wants it to be passed before any governing body would explain the process to the voters. If passed, then some governing group would want to implement it. This is similar to passing the bill to know what is in it, but in this case, the explanation is not there at all.

Please vote against SB0913.

Alan Lang
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SB 0913 Approval Voting 2024 UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Ella Ennis

Position: UNF



Ella Ennis, Legislative Chairman
Maryland Federation of Republican Women
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The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chairman
and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senate of Maryland
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: **SB 0913** Approval Voting Authorized by County Government - **UNFAVORABLE**

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members,

Approval voting is a novelty that treats an election as a popularity contest. It trivializes our very sacred right and duty as citizens to vote for that one person you believe is most qualified for the office.

Approval voting allows the voter to cast a vote for as many candidates as they wish for the same office. The winner is the candidate chosen most often. If you are voting for multiple people for each office at the county level, you are not making a choice.

Our **current election system** of voting for one person for each office, where the person who receives the most votes wins, works well -- the system is **not broken** -- it **does not need fixing**.

A **single election** could require a **ballot that utilizes two different voting methods**.

- The election for county offices is often on the same ballot as the election for state and/or national offices.
- County non-executive offices (Sheriff, State's Attorney, Judges, Orphans Court Judges, Clerk of the Circuit Court, School Board, etc.) will not use approval voting, further confusing voters.

Approval voting complicates the voting process. The bill's requirement for a voter education program validates the **confusing nature of approval voting**. This increases election costs, putting an additional burden on the taxpayer.

Allowing voters to choose multiple candidates for every office will increase the time each voter needs to cast their ballot. **Delays** will increase wait times at the polls, frustrating voters and possibly discouraging some voters to the point that they don't even come out to vote.

Please give **SB 0913** an **UNFAVORABLE** Report.

Sincerely,
Ella Ennis
Legislative Chairman

SB0913.pdf

Uploaded by: Suzanne Duffy

Position: UNF

SB0913 geez, so we'll have to pass this bill to know what's in it? THIS is a VERY BAD BILL because it has zero transparency as it does NOT explain how it will work, if it will work and why it should work or reasons to consider passing it. **It's really the worst put forth** this 2024 season. It feels like you all are just making things up as you go along to see if anyone is awake to notice, this is pathetic, poorly written and if intentional, shame on you!

SAY NO to this poorly written bill with ZERO explanation of the intended process or outcome.

And you wonder why trust in government is at an all time low!

Suzanne Price
AACo

“Public trust in the federal government, which has been low for decades, has returned to near record lows following a modest uptick in 2020 and 2021. Currently, fewer than two-in-ten Americans say they trust the government in Washington to do what is right “just about always” (1%) or “most of the time” (15%). This is among the lowest trust measures in nearly seven decades of polling. Last year, 20% said they trusted the government just about always or most of the time.” PEW Research, Sept 2023
<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/09/19/public-trust-in-government-1958-2023/>