

February 13, 2024

**Testimony on HB 479
Election Law – Deadline for Selection of Lieutenant Governor
Ways & Means**

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 479, which would amend the Maryland constitution to alter the current process for Gubernatorial candidates to select Lieutenant Governor candidates, allowing for a Lt. Governor candidate to be chosen after the primary.

Under current Maryland law, gubernatorial candidates must select their Lieutenant Governor running mates at the time they file their candidacy. This process unnecessarily limits candidates' choices – potential Lt. Governor candidates also considering running for Governor would be forced to decline the position, even though those candidates often grow large bases of support that could be advantageous to the eventual winner. The prospect of selecting a losing primary candidate that still has significant support outside of the winner's base as Lt. Governor could have a positive influence on the primary campaign itself, forcing all candidates to run more positive campaigns as not to alienate the base of their potential running partner.

However, we are concerned with HB 479's solution, which allows gubernatorial candidates to choose to file immediately with a Lt. Governor candidate or to choose one after the primary. This will create a system where some candidates are listed on primary ballots with a Lt. Governor and some without. This could cause voter confusion, or perhaps even create an unconscious bias toward more "official" candidates who appear with Lt. Governors, thus reducing the value of this change.

We urge the committee to consider this amendment before going ahead with a compromise approach that may undermine the reform itself. However, we ultimately support removing the requirement that gubernatorial candidates file with Lt. Governor partners.

For these reasons, we request a favorable report and hope that you will take our amendment into consideration.