

REGINA T. BOYCE
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—
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 17, 2024

RE: Ways and Means Hearing for HB0080 Election Law - Party and Elected Public Offices - Prohibition

Good Afternoon Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and the Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

For the record, I am Delegate Regina T. Boyce, here to testify on **HB0080 Election Law - Party and Elected Public Offices - Prohibition**. This bill has passed this committee and the House in 2020, 2021, and 2023. It was filed in 2022 but no action was taken.

HB0080 prohibits elected officials from also holding or registering for an elected office as a party official: the state central committee. The bill also prohibits individuals from simultaneously being a candidate for, or holding, a party office and an elected public office; and provides exceptions for candidates of the National Presidential Nominating Convention.

Historically, the organizing of parties began in Maryland in 1824 and was codified in law in 1886. It is stated in the Maryland Manual that “When primary elections developed at the end of the nineteenth century, state central committees formed to oversee their conduct.” The role of the state central committee, grassroots elected volunteers, is to build party organizations in each jurisdiction. Organizing is done in many ways: registering residents to vote, organizing and encouraging voter turnout during the primary and general elections, fundraising for the party, organizing volunteers for the party to elect party candidates, and facilitating the vacancy process to provide nominations to the governor when a delegate or senator resigns or is removed from office.

The practice of holding dual positions as an elected official and as a central committee member has been questionable. The dual positions pose an interesting dynamic that is imbalanced and a conflict of interest. I hope, as in the past, that this bill creates the needed dialogue around this questionable practice that in my opinion does not accurately serve the true democratic role of the party organization.

I, as well as a number of my constituents, thank you for your time and consideration of HB0080.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Regina T. Boyce'.

Regina T. Boyce