

HB0347\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV  
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Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
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**TESTIMONY ON HB#/0347 - FAVORABLE**

**General Assembly Vacancy – Political Party Central Committees - Procedure**

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

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

**My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0347 General Assembly Vacancy – Political Party Central Committees - Procedure**

Elections are held so that the voters can pick who should represent their interest in Annapolis. However, when a delegate or senator leaves their position, it falls to the Central Committee of that representative's party to pick a successor. This bill attempts to make the process more open and permit the involvement of the affected voters working in concert with that Central Committee. Statewide, 23% of the 188-member General Assembly first acquired their seats through appointment: 20% of the 141-person House of Delegates and one-third of the 47-member state Senate, according to figures published this past October by Common Cause

This bill is an attempt to make the process of choosing the successor more public and stops a committee member from being able to vote themselves into the office. It is a good step towards correcting that situation and returning us to a state where the voters pick their leaders, not their leaders picking themselves or their friends to serve in the General Assembly.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#0347.**