

TESTIMONY

February 26, 2025

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: SB0342 Voting Rights Act of 2025 - Counties and Municipalities

Sponsor: Senator Charles E. Sydnor III (Baltimore County - District 44)

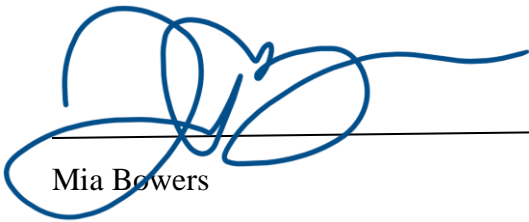
Position: **SUPPORT**

Reason for Position:

The St. Mary's County Branch #7025 strongly encourages a favorable committee vote on SB0342. The Voting Rights Act of 2025 would prohibit local governments from impairing or diminishing the right of a protected class member to vote or influence election outcomes. There are jurisdictions in Maryland where "At-Large" voting is still in place despite also having districts, this creates an environment where the voice of the majority can overpower the voice of a particular district, decreasing voter confidence and causing confusion.

We believe that the citizens of each county commissioner district have the right to select who represents their interests without influence from voters outside of their district. This dilution of voting power is anti-democratic and runs counter to the spirit of the Voting Rights Act. Establishing a Voting Rights Act in Maryland would bring the best parts of the landmark federal legislation and provide must-needed protections against voting discrimination. Maryland could help set the standard for state-level protections for minority voices.

We stand in solidarity with the Maryland State Conference of the NAACP calling for reform. Those who champion democracy and civil rights must do everything they can to strengthen it. This bill is one way the Maryland General Assembly can strengthen democracy in our state. We deserve the right to select the people who represent us at all levels, please help us make that a reality.



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Mia Bowers

St. Mary's Branch, President