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Joint Audit and Evaluation Committee
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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB2: Special Elections

Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
Wednesday, February 5, 2025 1:00 PM

In 2016, the General Assembly passed [SB554/HB260](#), a Constitutional Amendment later ratified by voters, to hold special elections for vacancies in the offices of the State Attorney General, Comptroller, or U.S. Senator that occur in the first half of a term. Every year since, legislators have attempted to similarly reform the appointment process for the General Assembly.

Nearly a quarter of our legislative colleagues were [selected by political party leaders](#)-- rather than **elected** by their constituents. There is growing discontent with the role of Party Central Committees, which do not allow voters to express their views as to who should represent them... perhaps for the balance of our four-year terms. According to a 2024 Gonzales poll, 85% of Marylanders favor filling vacancies in a special election.

[SB2](#) aims to modify the inadequately democratic Central Committee appointment process. It would require a Special Election to be held to coincide with the Presidential election schedule if a legislative vacancy occurs 55 days or more prior to the filing deadline. During the last two years of a term, Democratic and Republican Central Committees would submit nominations to the Governor, as they do now.

This bill passed the Senate in 2024 by a vote of 43-2.

SB2 would go into effect immediately following the voters' approval of the Constitutional Amendment in November 2026.

We have the ability to make our system more democratic, representative, and responsive, similar to the [29 other states](#)¹ that use Special Elections to fill legislative vacancies.

I urge a favorable report on SB2.

¹ AL, AR, CA, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, KS, KY, LA, MA, ME, MI, MN, MS, MO, NH, NJ, NY, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VA, and WI