

**Edward Fischman - Testimony in Support of SB 383 --**  
(Chair, Montgomery County chapter of Our Revolution MD)

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

I offer this testimony in support of bill, SB 383, to allow for ranked choice voting in Presidential primaries. We thank Senator Kagan for bringing this question before the Senate.

I am testifying on behalf of Our Revolution Maryland which has been advocating for various progressive initiatives, including reforms to our electoral process to be more inclusive of an electorate which is increasingly disenchanted with a system that they believe disenfranchises them in multiple ways. In a closed primary state, most of our members are registered Democrats, but do not always feel represented by the systems which produce our nominees.

In general, we favor the adoption of ranked choice voting, but it is most especially appropriate for Presidential primaries. Most states are primary states. The Democratic party uses a 15% cutoff to qualify for delegates in a state primary. In most districts, that has meant a great many voters are not represented at all at the national convention.

In contrast, those few states which still employ caucuses, have a similar 15% cutoff, but effectively use a ranked-choice voting process, allowing the voters to move to caucus with a different candidate if their first choice is eliminated in the initial rounds.

We believe that system much better reflects the preferences of voters, allowing them to express their initial preference, but also to have their vote count when it comes to having representation at the convention.

Allowing for ranked choice voting generally limits extremism, as it encourages even the more extreme voters to express approval of multiple candidates. The system is the most effective way to produce a consensus choice. In the context of Presidential primaries, it will allow for a more vigorous process rather than the early coronations we tend to have. Most importantly it will ensure the ultimate nominees have not just a majority of delegates, but also majority support among the voters who select the delegates.

The time has come for this reform, and Maryland should be a leader in embracing ranked choice voting for the national primaries.

On my own behalf, and on behalf of thousands of Our Revolution members in Maryland, I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 383.