



Indivisible: Central Maryland

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TESTIMONY FOR SB0002

General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan

Committee: Energy, Education and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Indivisible Central Maryland

Person Submitting: Liz Enagonio and Susan Radke, lead advocates

Position: FAVORABLE

Our names are Liz Enagonio and Susan Radke, lead advocates for Indivisible Central Maryland, a grassroots organization of constituents dedicated to protecting progressive and democratic values. Indivisible Central Maryland **strongly supports SB0002.**

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment to require that a special election be held at the same time as the regular statewide primary or biannual general elections to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly if the vacancy occurs on or before the date that is 55 days before the deadline for filing certificates of candidacy for the regular statewide election. At the moment, about 40% of our legislative positions are filled by appointment by the Governor. This does not give the voters in the district a chance to hear from and choose a person who best meets the needs of the community. It's a form of disenfranchisement, and damages the concept that citizens elect their representation. This in turn breeds cynicism with the electoral process, leading to distrust of elected officials and disengagement from the electoral process vital to a strong Democratic nation. At a time of Federal turmoil, strong state governments elected and supported by state voters are vital to maintaining a government of, by, and for the people.

We understand the fiscal constraints on Maryland at this time. The plan to add a special election to an already-existing election ballot seems financially prudent, and we support that plan.

For these reasons, **Indivisible Central Maryland STRONGLY supports SB0002, and recommends a FAVORABLE vote in committee.** Thank you.