Witness:	Jean Miceli Benhoff
Jurisdiction:	Baltimore County
Bill:	HB0383 Rank Choice Voting
Position:	OPPOSE

To MD Legislators: **Why do I oppose Rank Choice Voting?**

High Implementation Cost – The 2023 Howard County RCV budget proposal estimated **$840,000** to implement RCV in Board of Elections (BOE) elections. SB383 failed to present a cost estimate, possibly because the number is too alarming or the sponsors were unable to provide an accurate figure. The Fiscal Policy note –copied below on page 2 shows that FY 2028 the next presidential election this would **cost MD taxpayers a whopping $1,700,000!!! Shocking!!**

Maryland's Budget Deficit – With **a $2.7 billion deficit in 2025**, Maryland cannot afford the additional financial burden of implementing Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV), which requires new voting systems, voter education, and administrative changes. We/MD are broke & also in an energy crisis.

Limited Impact on Presidential Elections – Maryland has **only 10 electoral votes** and does not play a decisive role in national elections. Implementing RCV solely for the U.S. Presidential primary makes little sense, especially when other states continue using traditional voting methods.

Administrative Complexity – Adopting a separate RCV system for Presidential primaries creates confusion for voters, election officials, and candidates. It adds unnecessary complexity to Maryland's election process without providing clear benefits.

Election Security and Technology Risks – SB383 requires the State Board of Elections to review and certify election-supporting technology. However, implementing a new RCV system could introduce additional risks, software vulnerabilities, and increased reliance on technology that may not be adequately tested.

Potential Voter Confusion – RCV is often criticized for its complexity. Voters unfamiliar with ranking candidates may be discouraged from participating or make mistakes that could invalidate their ballots.

Lack of Widespread Adoption – Many states and jurisdictions have considered RCV but have either rejected or repealed it due to cost concerns, voter confusion, and administrative burdens. Maryland should not rush into adopting a system that has seen mixed results elsewhere.

SB 383

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 383   (Senator Kagan)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Elections - Ranked-Choice Voting in Contests for Presidential Nomination and Certification of Election-Supporting Technology

This bill authorizes the State Board of Elections (SBE) – notwithstanding any other provision of the Election Law Article – to use ranked-choice voting to conduct a contest for the nomination by a political party of a candidate for the office of President of the United States, beginning with the 2028 statewide primary election. Additionally, the bill requires SBE to (1) adopt specified regulations relating to election-supporting technology and (2) periodically review and evaluate election-supporting technology.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: If ranked-choice voting is used for the 2028 statewide primary election, general fund expenditures increase by $501,000 in FY 2027 and by $1.9 million in FY 2028. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
GF Expenditure	0	501,000	1,883,000	0	0
Net Effect	$0	($501,000)	($1,883,000)	$0	$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: If ranked-choice voting is used for the 2028 statewide primary election, local government expenditures increase, collectively, by $100,000 in FY 2027 and by $1.7 million in FY 2028. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.