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TESTIMONY ON SB#/0342- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Voting Rights Act of 2025 - Counties and Municipalities

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#/0342, **Voting Rights Act of 2025 - Counties and Municipalities**

This bill is to create protections from voter suppression tactics being applied to Maryland voting. As reported by the Brennan Center for Justice “There is a large and growing pile of evidence that strict voter ID laws disproportionately impact voters of color.”¹

Extensive work by the ACLU has documented *Why Access to Voting is Key to Systemic Equality*.²

Voting is a fundamental civil right, and it shouldn't be infringed upon, no matter your race or zip code. Although the Voting Rights Act of 1965 prohibits racially discriminatory voting tactics and policies, including diluting the voting strength of racial minorities, Black people and communities of color continue to face numerous obstacles to voting.

This bill facilitates Maryland being proactive against voter suppression techniques that the Brennan Center and ACLU have uncovered and reported on. This bill will act to prohibit the imposition or application of a method for electing the governing body of a county or municipality that impairs the ability of members of a protected class to elect candidates of the members' choice or influence the outcome of an election by diluting or abridging the rights of voters who are members of a protected class.

Maryland can lead the nation in working and resolving these problems.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#/0342.

¹ <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/impact-voter-suppression-communities-color>

² <https://www.aclu.org/news/voting-rights/why-access-to-voting-is-key-to-systemic-equality>