



February 24, 2025

Dear Vice Chairperson Kagan and Members of The Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

I am testifying on behalf of RepresentWomen to support the passage of SB 383, which authorizes the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Primary Contests for President of the United States. The organization where I serve as Program and Partnerships Manager, [RepresentWomen](#), tracks electoral outcomes for women in jurisdictions with ranked choice voting. Our overall mission is to increase gender parity in elected office and address the barriers women face in politics. **RCV is a data-proven method under which women are more often elected to public office.**

In both theory and practice, ranked choice voting eliminates the barriers women face in plurality aka winner-take-all elections, which creates more opportunities for women to run successfully. Our research finds that women have better opportunities to run in and win RCV elections. Plurality elections favor status quo candidates. There are built-in advantages for the incumbent candidates which are more likely to be male, which include but aren't limited to fundraising. Raising campaign funds is more difficult for all women but especially women of color. RCV elections also tend to include less negative campaign ads that have a more disparate impact on women.

More women can successfully run for office in RCV elections because, without fear of splitting the vote, there is greater support for women candidates to run. Additionally, campaigns tend to be more civil and more issue-focused, which appeals to women candidates and provides greater incentive for them to run. We also find that when voters have the ability to express their true preferences rather than vote strategically, more women win as a result.

RCV would increase voter engagement and subsequently increase voter turnout because voters feel they have more of a stake in the election. The goal for any democracy is to encourage as many eligible voters as possible to make sure their voices are heard through their vote.

Here are a few of our resources that may be of interest:

- a [memo](#) on ranked choice voting & women's representation
- a [dashboard](#) on ranked choice voting and women's representation stats
- a [toolkit](#) with additional RCV and representation materials



I ask you to consider RepresentWomen's testimony and vote YES on SB 383 to allow RCV to be utilized in Primary Elections for President of the United States. It casts a wider net and creates a more inclusive and robust election process.

SB 383 would also equip the Maryland State Board of Elections to review any necessary equipment and technology to successfully facilitate and execute the RCV election results.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely Yours,

Tamaya Dennard
Program and Partnerships Manager