

SB0171_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
02/05/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
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TESTIMONY ON SB#0171 - FAVORABLE
General Assembly Vacancy - Political Party Central Committees – Procedures

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0171 General Assembly Vacancy - Political Party Central Committees – Procedures

Elections are held so that the voters can pick who should represent their interest in Annapolis. However, when a delegate or senator leaves their position, it falls to the Central Committee of that representative's party to pick a successor. This bill attempts to make the process more open and permit the involvement of the affected voters working in concert with that Central Committee. In 2024, Statewide, 23% of the 188-member General Assembly first acquired their seats through appointment: 20% of the 141-person House of Delegates and one-third of the 47-member state Senate, according to figures published this past October by Common Cause

This bill is an attempt to make the process of choosing the successor more public and stops a committee member from being able to vote themselves into the office. It is a good step towards correcting that situation and returning us to a state where the voters pick their leaders, not their leaders picking themselves or their friends to serve in the General Assembly.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0171.