

Testimony in Support of SB0002

From: Liza Smith, Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee District 14

Position: SUPPORT - FAVORABLE

Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Liza Smith, and I am a member of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, District 14. I want to express my strong support for Senate Bill SB0002, a measure that would ensure a special election is held to fill vacancies in the Maryland General Assembly. Democracy requires that the people have the opportunity to choose their representatives in government. Allowing a political party Central Committee to appoint individuals to these roles undermines this fundamental right that all citizens should possess.

Currently, twenty-five states conduct special elections for their state legislatures, while Maryland is the only state in the Mid-Atlantic region without this provision. Special elections are not only fairer for voters but also promote more competitive races, allowing anyone to present themselves as a candidate and leaving the decision in the hands of the public. This system encourages greater participation from diverse groups within our state and ensures that our representatives accurately reflect the views and interests of their constituents.

The proposed amendment aligns with the principles of fairness, transparency, and citizen engagement. By holding a

special election concurrently with the regular statewide primary and general elections, we can streamline the process, reduce the costs associated with separate special elections, and ensure that vacancies in office are filled without unnecessary delays.

It is perplexing that neighboring states like Virginia allow their citizens to vote promptly when vacancies occur, while Maryland falls behind. Our residents deserve the same level of democratic representation and responsiveness from their government.

I urge the Ways and Means committee to recognize the importance of this bill in enhancing our democratic process, promoting civic engagement, and upholding the values of inclusivity and representation. By supporting Senate Bill SB0002, we can empower Maryland residents to have a voice in selecting their leaders and ensure continuity in governance when vacancies arise.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration and support for Senate Bill SB0002.

Liza Smith
Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee
District 14