



# Maryland Forward Party

January 24, 2025

## Maryland Forward Party

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### **HB 0174:**

General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

Position: Favorable

Dear Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland Forward Party and our 6,000 Maryland supporters. Forward Party is among the fastest growing political organizations in the United States and in Maryland. Our organization is dedicated to promoting and enhancing our democracy in Maryland. We also believe that all Maryland taxpayers should have an opportunity to be heard. In Maryland there is need to reform the process for which vacancies in the General Assembly be filled.

HB 0174 is proposing a constitutional amendment to require that a special election be held at the same time as the regular statewide primary and general elections that are held in the second year of the term to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly, if the vacancy occurs on or before the date that is 55 days before the deadline for filing certificates of candidacy for the regular statewide election. The Maryland Forward Party views this Favorably.



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Maryland voters should always be the deciding factors for which elected officials serve in office. In 2024 25% of the General Assembly were initially appointed to their positions, and not voted into office.

<https://bethesdamagazine.com/2024/04/09/moco-politics-in-annapolis-its-deja-vu-all-over-again-for-special-elections-legislation/>

This percentage is alarmingly high and indicates a likely gap in Maryland's democratic process. In 2024, SB 0029 was overwhelmingly supported in the State Senate (43-2) but the measure was then unable to emerge from the House Ways and Means Committee.

HB 0174 will, by constitutional amendment, ensure that this democratic loophole be closed and that we re-instill this power back to Maryland voters, with the use of a mandated special elections.

Respectfully

PJ Benenati

Maryland Forward Party, Chair

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