



## **TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

### **HB 215 Elections – Ranked-Choice Voting – Contests for Presidential Nomination**

#### **POSITION – Support**

**BY: Linda Kohn, President**

**DATE: January 28, 2025**

The League of Women Voters of Maryland (LWVMD) supports HB 215, which would allow the use of ranked-choice voting (RCV) for the presidential primary elections in 2028, along with an education campaign for voters and a review of the process to inform recommendations for the process in future elections.

The League was founded on the belief that voters play a critical role in a democracy. RCV maximizes that ability by ensuring that winning candidates have support from a majority of voters. The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes that it is important that election systems 1) produce representation that reflects community sentiment, 2) help increase voter participation by encouraging a broader range of candidates and more civil campaigns, and 3) are feasible to implement.

RCV empowers voters because it allows them to vote for their true first-choice candidate without feeling as though they might be “wasting” their vote. RCV empowers elected officials because they have a stronger mandate and more accountability when they know they are supported by a majority (at least 50%) of voters. RCV encourages more civil, less negative campaigns because candidates need to appeal to their opponents’ supporters for their second-choice votes.

For these reasons, the League supports the use of Ranked Choice Voting in general. We believe the use of RCV in the 2028 presidential primary, which we expect will be an open primary for both major political parties, would help ensure strong candidates who enjoy clear majority support within their parties rather than candidates who have only garnered support from a plurality. We also believe the presidential primaries would be a good opportunity for voters to gain experience with RCV, and we would be happy to support the associated voter education campaigns throughout the state.

**The LWVMD urges a favorable report on HB 215.**