

**Testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee
HB 1043 Maryland Voting Right Act of 2025 – Voter Suppression and Vote
Dilution**

Bill Sponsor: Delegates Smith, R. Lewis, and Palakovich Carr

POSITION: FAVORABLE

By: Marna Brown-Krausz, Defend Democracy Team Member, Indivisible, Howard County

Date: February 24, 2025

On behalf of our 900+ Indivisible Howard County members, I am writing in support of HB1043. We believe this bill will strengthen the right to vote in Maryland by prohibiting local governments from taking any action related to the election process that results in material disparity between members of a protected class and other members of the electorate, or that would deny or impair the right of a protected class member to vote or participate in the political process.

The bill authorizes notice requirements for local governments before implementing certain changes relating to the election process; prohibits local government from election policy or practice resulting in material disparity in voter participation, access to voting opportunities, or the opportunity or ability to participate in the political process between members of a protected class and other members of the electorate; and prohibits local government from diluting the vote of protected class members.

The bill also authorizes legal mechanisms to enforce the Act.

Multiple states have enacted similar voting rights act protections, including Washington (2018), Oregon (2019), Virginia (2021), New York (2022), Connecticut (2023), and, most recently, Minnesota (2024). As of this writing, similar provisions are under consideration in Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Michigan and New Jersey.

Indivisible Howard County urges a favorable report on HB 1043.

Thank you for your consideration.