

**Testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee  
HB 1044 Maryland Voting Right Act of 2025 – Preclearance and Voter  
Intimidation and Obstruction  
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 HB1044. We believe this bill will strengthen the right to vote in Maryland by providing Marylanders with legal mechanisms to challenge voter intimidation, deception, or obstruction that interfere with the right to vote.

These include mechanisms: (1) for providing advance approval of election changes by the attorney general or a court, known as “preclearance”, in order to stop voter discrimination without the cost and delay of case-by-case litigation, and (2) for filing legal actions against intimidation, deception, or obstruction that interfere with an individual’s right to vote.

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). California has had a voting rights act since 2002, amended in 2015-2016. New Jersey’s Assembly Committee just passed that State’s act in December of 2024. As of this writing, similar provisions are under consideration in Alabama, Colorado, Florida and Michigan.

Indivisible Howard County urges a favorable report on HB 1044.

Thank you for your consideration.