



TESTIMONY FOR HB0075 Election Law – Special Elections

Bill Sponsor: Chair, Ways and Means Committee

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Shore Progress

Person Submitting: Jared Schablein, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0075 on behalf of Shore Progress. Shore Progress (formerly LSPC) is a nonpartisan civic organization covering the Eastern Shore of Maryland. We are committed to building strong communities across the Eastern Shore by building the Progressive movement.

We strongly support the passage of this legislation, which proposes essential updates to the procedures for scheduling special elections in Maryland. These changes will make the process of filling vacancies in county councils and executive offices more efficient, cost-effective, and responsive to the needs of voters and local governments. Key Reasons to Support this Bill:

Flexibility in Election Scheduling: This bill allows county councils to tailor the special election process to meet their specific needs by permitting them to resolve a vacancy through a special general election without holding a special primary. This flexibility can save time and resources while ensuring that vacancies are filled quickly and efficiently.

Cost-Effectiveness: Special elections, particularly primaries, can be expensive and logistically challenging for local jurisdictions. This bill reduces the financial and administrative burdens on taxpayers and election officials by enabling counties to eliminate unnecessary special primaries.

Streamlined Process for Voters: Simplifying the special election process helps ensure that voters are not overwhelmed by additional election cycles, particularly in cases where voter turnout for primaries may be historically low. A single special general election can still provide a democratic and transparent mechanism to fill vacancies.

Maintaining Fair Representation: This bill ensures that communities remain represented in their local government without prolonged empty seats or delayed action on critical local issues by addressing vacancies promptly and cost-effectively.

As an organization committed to advancing fair and inclusive governance, Shore Progress views this bill as a practical solution to improve the administration of special elections in Maryland. It balances fiscal responsibility with maintaining robust democratic processes. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.