



# Maryland Forward Party

January 24, 2025

## Maryland Forward Party

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### HB 0215:

Elections - Ranked-Choice Voting in Contests for Presidential Nomination and Certification of Election-Supporting Technology

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. We are advocates for empowering voters and increasing statewide voter turnout. Maryland Presidential Primaries are relatively late in the election cycle and often Maryland voters feel that “it’s too late” for their vote to matter or that “the election is already decided” or that they have to strategically use their vote to help ensure that the other person/organization loses, rather than advocating for someone who truly aligns with their values and needs. This often results in voters not feeling empowered and then opting out from participating in the presidential primary. 2024 is a good example where both Trump and Biden were generally considered to be less desirable choices but voters rarely voted for an alternative.



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Ranked Choice Voting for the Presidential Primary Election will ensure that voters have the freedom to freely vote for their candidate of choice, without the fear of “wasting their vote” . It will also promote candidate competition for the Presidential Primary. Winning Presidential candidates will owe their support to continued campaigning in Maryland and appealing to a broad and diverse audience. This will help these candidates to distinguish their policy platforms, to better meet the needs of Maryland Voters.

HB 0215 is an enabling piece of legislature that will open the potential for the use of Ranked Choice Voting in the Presidential Primary Election starting in 2028.

This bill will:

1. only apply to the Presidential Primary starting in 2028, not the General election.
2. Allow each political party to decide if they are to use RCV in the Primary for President
3. Provide a statewide voter educational campaign, to engage with Maryland voters and increase comfort around RCV.
4. Equip the Maryland State Board of Elections with the necessary technology or equipment to regulate and review the new format.
5. Require a study and report, after the 2028 presidential primary, to evaluate its effectiveness.



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This bill will not:

1. Not impact any other Maryland election except for the Presidential Primary.
2. Will not expand without further legislation.

Ranked Choice Voting also ensures that the ultimate winners in Maryland have earned at least 50% of the vote through the automatic instant runoff, or the initial vote. This consensus-style voting technique will grow voter confidence and voter engagement in Maryland.

The Maryland Forward Party views this Favorably.

Respectfully

PJ Benenati

Maryland Forward Party, Chair

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