

01/28/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0174- POSITION: FAVORABLE

General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0174, **General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office**

This bill, which is being introduced again from prior legislative sessions, is an attempt to fix a problem in our legislation with replacing delegates or senators who leave the body for another legislative or executive position. The replacement of that individual is not the choice of the voters, it is left to a small group of people who run the jurisdiction's party central committee. The voters are not given a choice to find the person they would pick to fill the opening.

This bill will change the procedures for filling these openings that occur via a constitutional amendment to be submitted for voter approval. The bill is proposing a constitutional amendment to require that a special election be held at the same time as the regular statewide primary and general elections that are held in the second year of the term to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly if the vacancy occurs on or before the date that is 55 days before the deadline for filing certificates of candidacy for the regular statewide election. This verbiage basically says hold a special election, and here is the timing and process for doing so.

This bill empowers voters to choose their representatives instead of a small group of political committee members whose view of a candidate does not match to the majority views of the electorate.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0174.