



February 18, 2025

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am testifying on behalf of RepresentWomen to support the passage of HB 1094, Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 9-25, legislation that would expand the local authority of Montgomery County to conduct Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) elections. The organization that I founded and lead, [RepresentWomen](#), tracks electoral outcomes for women in jurisdictions with RCV. Our overall mission is to increase gender balance in elected office and address the barriers women face in politics. **Ranked choice voting is a proven strategy that enables more women to seek and win elected office. Women hold 52% of seats in jurisdictions with ranked choice voting – almost twice the norm in places without RCV.**

In both theory and practice, ranked choice voting eliminates the barriers women face in plurality aka winner-take-all elections, which creates more opportunities for women to run successfully. Our research finds that women have better opportunities to run in and win RCV elections because split votes among like candidates are eliminated. RCV elections also provide an incentive for candidates to find common ground, because candidates are looking for votes from their opponents' supporters which in turn can lead to more civil campaigns. We also find that when voters have the ability to express their true preferences rather than vote strategically, more women win as a result.

RepresentWomen creates an annual Gender Parity Index (GPI) that awards each state a grade in accordance with how they are faring on electing women to office at the local, state, and federal levels. Maryland struggles with gender parity as it has received a "D" since the inception of our report since 2013. A major factor is a lack of policies and systems – like ranked choice voting – that remove barriers that women face when running for office.

Montgomery County has embraced innovation and led the way on democracy reforms across the state. It was the first jurisdiction to adopt public financing. We are hoping that you keep your trailblazing approach to increase voter participation and improve the electoral process.

Here are a few of our resources that may be of interest:

- a [memo](#) on ranked choice voting & women's representation
- a [dashboard](#) on ranked choice voting and women's representation stats
- a [toolkit](#) with additional RCV and representation materials



I ask you to consider RepresentWomen's testimony and vote YES on HB 1094, Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 9-25 to allow RCV to be utilized in local elections. It casts a wider net and creates a more inclusive and robust election process that can lead to better governance.

This legislation would also equip the Montgomery County Board of Elections to provide standards for reviewing any necessary equipment and technology to successfully facilitate and execute the RCV election results.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cynthia", followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line that extends to the right.

Cynthia Richie Terrell
Founder and Executive Director