

Subject: Testimony in Support of Maryland State House Bill  
HB0174

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and esteemed  
members of the Ways & Means Committee,

My name is Liza Smith. I am a member of the Montgomery  
County Democratic Central Committee, representing District 14.  
I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill  
HB0174, sponsored by Delegate Linda Foley, which proposes a  
constitutional amendment to require a special election be held at  
the same time as the regular statewide primary and general  
elections in the second year of the term to fill a vacancy in the  
office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly.

For the past three years, I have been advocating in Annapolis for  
the citizens of Maryland to have the opportunity to vote for their  
representatives in a timely manner. House Bill HB0174 aims to  
ensure that the people of Maryland can exercise their democratic  
right to choose their leaders promptly, especially when  
vacancies occur in the General Assembly.

The proposed amendment aligns with fairness, transparency, and citizen engagement principles. By holding a special election concurrently with the regular statewide primary and general elections, we can streamline the process, reduce the costs associated with separate special elections, and ensure that office vacancies are filled without undue delay.

It is perplexing to me that neighboring states like Virginia already afford their citizens the opportunity to vote promptly when vacancies occur, while Maryland lags behind in this regard. Our residents deserve the same level of democratic representation and responsiveness from their government.

I urge the Ways & Means Committee to consider the bill's importance in enhancing our democratic process, promoting civic engagement, and upholding the values of inclusivity and representation. By supporting House Bill HB0174, we can empower Maryland residents to have a voice in selecting their leaders and ensure continuity in governance when vacancies arise.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter. I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration and support for House Bill HB0174.

Sincerely,

Liza Smith

Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, District 14