

IndivisibleHoCoMD



TESTIMONY FOR HB 983

ELECTION LAW - LOCAL BOARDS OF ELECTION - LANGUAGE-RELATED ASSISTANCE

Bill Sponsors: Delegates Mireku-North and Wilkins

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Indivisible Howard County

Person Submitting: Marijane Monck - Co-Facilitator, Defend Democracy Team

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting testimony in favor of HB 983 on behalf of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is a 900+ member organization comprising numerous action teams. The Defend Democracy Team works on issues involving campaign finance and election integrity.

HB 983 would require local governments to ensure that people who don't speak English comfortably are not left behind in the voting process. The bill requires that in a locality with a population of 2% or more that are a language minority, the local government or board of elections provides voting materials in that additional language.

Maryland voters only benefit if the options for voting and the overall process are in a language they can understand. Maryland is the most diverse state on the east coast, made up of a large number of Limited English Proficiency (ELP) voters. ELP voters deserve the same access as anyone else.

We support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.