



Maryland Association of Election Officials

Representing the Local Election Boards of the State of Maryland

January 28, 2025

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

HB75 - Support

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members,

The Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO), representing local election officials and Election Boards from all 24 jurisdictions across the state, offers its support for House Bill 75. This legislation presents an opportunity to improve the administration of special elections while maintaining the integrity and efficiency of our election processes. We commend the State Board of Elections (SBE) for its initiative in proposing this bill, and we appreciate the legislature's consideration of this important measure.

HB 75 provides counties with the flexibility to determine how vacancies in a county council or executive office should be filled. By allowing counties to forgo a special primary election and proceed directly to a special general election, this bill respects the unique needs and circumstances of individual jurisdictions. Counties can choose between a partisan or nonpartisan approach to special elections, tailoring the process to best suit their voters.

Importantly, HB 75 is not expected to increase the number of special elections. Rather, it offers practical tools for counties to manage these events more effectively. By eliminating the need for a special primary election in certain cases, the bill could significantly reduce the workload for local election officials. This streamlined process would alleviate the administrative burden associated with managing multiple election cycles for a single vacancy, particularly in terms of staffing, ballot preparation, and voter outreach.

The bill also ensures that special elections continue to be conducted in a manner consistent with state laws and regulations, even when there are conflicts with county charters or local laws. This safeguard reinforces the uniformity and integrity of Maryland's election processes and reduces the unique conflicts that can exist with 24 jurisdictions' charters and laws.

HB 75 represents a thoughtful and balanced approach to addressing vacancies in local offices. It upholds the principles of fair and accessible elections while recognizing the operational realities faced by election officials. For these reasons, MAEO urges a favorable report on HB 75.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We remain committed to supporting legislation that enhances the efficiency, accessibility, and integrity of elections in Maryland.