



## TESTIMONY FOR HB215

Elections - Ranked-Choice Voting in Contests for Presidential Nomination and Certification of Election-Supporting Technology

Bill Sponsors: Delegates Fair, Feldmark, Kaufman, Lehman, Ruth, Stewart, and Terrasa

Committee: Ways and Means

Organization Submitting: Indivisible Howard County

Person Submitting: Tim Pyne - Defend Democracy Team

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB215 on behalf of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is a group of about 900 Howard County citizens and is registered with the Indivisible Projects National Network<sup>[1]</sup>

A 2021 study shows that youth turnout was higher in cities with RCV<sup>[2]</sup>. Younger voter turnout is about 9% more likely according to this study of about 10 RCV cities and 10 plurality control cities. The study attributes the increased turnout to candidate mobilization and contact with young voters. Candidates are incentivized to reach out to more voters so that they can gain any position on the voter's ranking.

In 2020, five state parties used ranked ballots in presidential primaries and no votes were wasted on candidates who dropped out before election day. Comparatively, 3 million votes were wasted in single choice states. In 2016, 700,000 republican votes were wasted. In the case of Arizona that was 16% of votes.

This year, surveys in Utah and California bay area corroborate 2024 surveys in Alaska, Maine, and Oregon where 8 out of 10 people or more are satisfied with RCV and understand it well<sup>[3]</sup>.

It is vital that HB215 passes this year so the State Board of Elections has time to prepare for the 2028 presidential primary. Recent federal executive branch actions are initial steps to a long term plan toward a more authoritarian nation. Maryland must begin long term plans to safeguard against further instability.

I urge the Ways and Means committee to give a favorable report for HB215.

[1] <https://indivisiblehocomd.org/indivisible-project-and-indivisiblehocomd/>

[2] <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/politicsandgovernance/article/view/3914>

[3] <https://fairvote.org/new-surveys-voters-love-ranked-choice-voting/>