

February 23, 2026

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland Senate  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Senate Bill 800 - Task Force on the Implementation of Approval Voting and Ranked-Choice Voting  
- Favorable with Amendments**

Dear Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members:

On behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland, we are providing favorable support with amendments on **SB 800 (HB 1289)**, *Task Force on the Implementation of Approval Voting and Ranked-Choice Voting*.

The task force could provide insightful information for legislators and election administrators to strengthen Maryland's democracy. As more local jurisdictions in Maryland explore or adopt ranked choice voting, the task force could provide clearer guidance on how a new voting method could be implemented for state level elections.

**We strongly recommend the following amendments:**

- **Membership** - Add three (3) additional Task Force members, with specific expertise in RCV, approval voting, and election systems in general.
- **Scope** - The Task Force should only evaluate state-level offices (General Assembly and statewide) to respect municipal independence as it relates to election law. In addition, the task force should evaluate how these voting methods improve or allow for fair representation.
- **Reporting Date** - We support modifying the effective reporting date to December 1, 2026 so that findings and recommendations can be used in next year's session of the General Assembly.

Detailed text of the suggested amendments is included on the next page of this written testimony.

We respectfully ask the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to give SB800 full consideration and a favorable report with amendments.

Sincerely,



**Owen Anderson**  
Deputy Director

Ranked Choice Voting Maryland  
8484 Georgia Avenue, Ste 240  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

## Suggested Amendments to HB 1289 / SB 800

### Amendment 1 - Task Force Members

**ADD:** two representatives from state and national organizations with expertise with ranked choice voting

**ADD:** two representatives from state and national organizations with expertise with approval voting

**INCREASE:** two individuals with expertise in election systems

**MODIFY:** one representative of ~~a local board of elections~~ the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO)

**Reason:** The bill creates a 10-member task force. The suggested amendments add 3 additional members with specific expertise in RCV, approval voting, and election systems in general.

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### Amendment 2 - Scope of Task Force

**ADD:** focus on implementation for approval voting and ranked-choice voting for state-level elections (General Assembly and statewide offices) only

**ADD:** examine the use of approval voting and ranked-choice voting to achieve proportional representation with multi-member districts

**Reason:** The task force should only evaluate state-level offices because municipalities are not governed by state election law. In addition, it would be beneficial to understand if these voting methods improve or allow for fair representation.

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### Amendment 3 - Effective Date

**MODIFY:** On or before December 1, 2027

**Reason:** Setting the effective day to December 1, 2026 allows for legislation in the 2027 General Assembly session.