



**TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
SB 800 Task Force on the Implementation of Approval Voting and Ranked-Choice Voting**

Position: Favorable

By: Linda T. Kohn, President

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In 2014 the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County did a study of Instant Runoff Voting, also known as Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). In 2019 the fact sheet that accompanied this study was shared at our statewide convention. This is the position adopted by our members state-wide:

Support the option to use Instant Runoff Voting (IRV):

- 1. for single-seat or executive office elections, both at the state and county and local level. This would require the winner to receive a **majority of the votes cast**.*
- 2. to fill vacancies in any vacancies in any state or county offices, when special elections are held, instead of conducting both special political party primaries and a special general election.*

Support requiring all voting equipment (hardware and software) to accommodate IRV and require all voting equipment (hardware and software) for use in Maryland allow alternative ways of casting and counting ballots and be usable for all county and municipal elections.

Our League members found that having a deeper understanding about Rank Choice Voting and its benefits and how it has been implemented in other jurisdictions, made them much more supportive of the concept. Therefore, we do support the idea of a task force as outlined in SB 800 because it seems that the General Assembly, for some time, has been struggling with understanding the benefits and how it can be implemented in Maryland.

For at least five years Montgomery County has been asking for the authority to move forward with implementation of RCV in their county. The findings of this task force might be helpful for that effort

We request a favorable report on SB 800.