

Testimony in Favor of House Bill HB0333

General Assembly Vacancy – Political Party Central
Committee – Procedures

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Hearing Date: March 25, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Liza Smith. I am an elected member of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee representing District 14. I respectfully urge your support for House Bill 0333.

HB0333 is a commonsense reform that strengthens transparency, fairness, and public trust in the process used to fill vacancies in the Maryland General Assembly.

When a vacancy occurs, central committees are entrusted with making a decision that directly impacts representation for thousands of residents. That

responsibility must be carried out in a way that is open, accountable, and worthy of public confidence.

In Montgomery County, our Central Committee already voluntarily follows the core principles outlined in this legislation. We provide public notice, hold open meetings, allow applicants to be heard, and conduct our decision-making process transparently. These practices ensure that residents can see how decisions are made and understand the qualifications of those seeking to serve.

However, this level of transparency is not consistent across the state. In some jurisdictions, vacancy selections are made with limited public input, minimal notice, or unclear procedures. This inconsistency undermines trust in the process and creates inequities in how representation is determined.

HB0333 establishes a clear, uniform standard by requiring:

- Public notice of vacancies and application procedures
- Open and accessible meetings

- Transparent voting processes
- Ethical safeguards, including recusal requirements for applicants serving on central committees

These are not burdensome requirements. They are basic democratic expectations.

Maryland voters deserve confidence that when they are not directly selecting their representatives, the process used in their place reflects the highest standards of fairness and integrity. Transparency is not optional—it is essential to maintaining trust in our democratic institutions.

This bill does not change who makes the decision. It ensures that how the decision is made is open, fair, and accountable to the public.

As someone who has participated in this process under transparent guidelines, I can say clearly: these practices strengthen—not hinder—the work of central committees.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB0333.

Sincerely,

Liza Smith

Member, Montgomery County Democratic Central
Committee

District 14