



2/9/2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

The Center for Election Science respectfully submits this letter in support of Senate Bill 800. The Center for Election Science is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving democratic outcomes through research and education on voting methods, including approval voting and other evidence-based reforms. Our mission is to ensure that election systems empower voters to express their preferences accurately and that election outcomes reflect broad voter support.

SB 800 represents a prudent and forward-looking approach to election policy. Rather than mandating immediate implementation of any alternative voting method, the bill establishes a structured task force to evaluate approval voting and ranked-choice voting through research, comparative analysis, and stakeholder engagement.



At a time when several states have chosen to outright prohibit or preempt consideration of alternative voting methods, Maryland is taking a more measured approach. By authorizing a task force to study these systems, Maryland affirms that election policy should be guided by data, real-world experience, administrative feasibility, and voter impact.

Maryland has seen multiple legislative proposals related to both approval voting and ranked-choice voting in recent years. HB 1289 provides an opportunity to consolidate those discussions into a comprehensive review process.

The Center for Election Science supports careful, evidence-based study of voting innovations. Approval voting, in particular, has been adopted in municipal elections in jurisdictions such as Fargo, North Dakota and St. Louis, Missouri, demonstrating that alternative methods can be implemented successfully at scale. However, any reform should be considered thoughtfully and transparently.

SB 800 does not predetermine an outcome. It simply ensures that Maryland policymakers and voters have access to rigorous analysis before making long-term structural changes to the state's election system. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 1289.

Sincerely,
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