

POSITION: FAVORABLE (FAV)

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 580 - Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 1-26 - FAV

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 580, which would authorize Montgomery County to adopt ranked choice voting (RCV) for local elections.

As a Montgomery County resident, I believe RCV would strengthen our local democracy in meaningful ways. From my perspective, two benefits stand out.

First, ranked choice voting encourages voters like me to look more closely at the policies of each candidate. When I can rank my preferences rather than just pick one, I find myself researching the full field of candidates more thoroughly. I want to make informed choices for my second and third rankings, not just my first. This deeper engagement makes me a better-informed voter.

Second, RCV encourages candidates to find common ground with each other. Since candidates benefit from being ranked second or third by voters whose first choice is someone else, they have an incentive to appeal broadly and build coalitions rather than simply attack their opponents. This leads to more civil campaigns and, ultimately, to elected officials who are better prepared to work together.

I have been encouraged by the results in other jurisdictions that use RCV. Over 65 communities across the United States now use ranked choice voting, including Takoma Park. Washington D.C. and Greenbelt have also voted overwhelmingly in favor of RCV. The concept is intuitive—we rank things every day—and voters in these communities have adapted well.

This bill simply gives Montgomery County the option to implement RCV if our County Council chooses to do so. I urge a favorable report on HB 580.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Erdman
Potomac, Maryland