

February 11, 2026

Testimony on HB350

Voting Rights Act of 2026 – Counties and Municipal Corporations

Position: Favorable

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

I offer these comments in support of HB350, the Maryland Voting Rights Act, which clearly outlines protections to ensure all Marylanders are assured equal opportunity to choose their representatives.

I am 72 years old and have not missed an election for over 50 years, as I believe that my vote is my voice and that each voice has significance in governance. My efforts to support free and fair elections include many years as an election judge in the past, and now as a Voter Registration Distributor (VRD) for St. Mary's County.

Knowing the history of voting rights in America, and how these rights were acquired by women and minorities through great difficulty and sacrifice not all that long ago; it is appalling to me that any citizen of this country can still have this crucial hard-won right to be heard in any way suppressed or restricted.

Recent federal court decisions placing limits on the Voting Rights Act of 1965; efforts to add additional measures to address unsubstantiated claims of frequent ineligible or non-citizen voting; and the now looming potential for federal interference in the 2026 election, make the need to secure this fundamental right for Marylanders crucial at this time. Passage of this Bill will help to ensure that every eligible Maryland voter has access and opportunity to participate in free and fair elections.

Finally, I want to add this quote from testimony on a somewhat related bill from a prior year: "It is fundamental to democratic elections that the people within a jurisdiction be empowered to elect their own representatives. To deny them this power is to engage arguably in a form of voter suppression by diluting their vote and denying proper representation." That bill did not pass – this one must!

Thank you for considering a favorable vote on HB350.

Joyce Sims

Mechanicsville MD 20659