



February 23, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells, Chair
and Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Maryland House of Delegates, Annapolis, Maryland

RE: **HB1289** – Task Force on the Implementation of Approval Voting and Ranked-Choice Voting -
UNFAVORABLE

Dear Chair Wells and Committee Members,

The 1,308 members of the Maryland Federation of Republican Women strongly oppose HB1289.

Ranked Choice Voting is majority rule only when the winning candidate is determined in Round 1. That is the only round where all votes originally cast are counted. In all subsequent rounds, votes of some voters are excluded from the count.

Millions of voters around the country voted against Ranked Choice Voting initiatives in the 2024 election — Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, and Oregon. Ranked Choice Voting had already been banned in 5 additional states – Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, South Dakota, Tennessee.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) will:

- **Reduce a voter’s ability to make an informed decision** -- choosing alternative candidates (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. choices) without knowing all who remain in the race at a particular point in time is unfair. That voting method is appropriate only when all voters are in the same location at the time of subsequent votes.
- **Increase voter confusion and the potential for “spoiled” ballots.**
 - A single erasure or strike-through could invalidate the entire ballot. Voters who wait until the deadline to complete their ballot then make an error will not have time to secure a replacement ballot.
 - Mailed ballot voters will have no one present to explain the new, complicated process (nearly 600,000 voters in the 2024 Primary Election).
 - Ballots from other 2024 U.S. elections demonstrate the inadequacy of ballot instructions:
 - Page 3 -- sample 2024 ballot -- City of Portland OR -- voters were instructed to rank up to 6 of 19 candidates.
 - Page 4 -- 2024 Presidential election ballot -- State of Maine.
- **Complicate and slow the process of counting votes and certifying election results.**
 - The more candidates and positions involved, the more cumbersome and tedious the process. In 2022, each Maryland jurisdiction had at least 23 offices on the ballot, in addition to ballot questions.
 - Under both Approval Voting and Ranked Choice Voting, voters will need much longer to make 3 or more choices for each position on the ballot.
 - Some election day voters are likely to walk away from the polls if the line is too long or moving too slowly.
- **Undermine the public’s confidence in election results** -- moving from the easily understood “one vote per office” to complex and confusing formulas for tallying votes.

- Result in increased numbers of **voters skipping down-ballot races**. Statistics already show a decrease in the number of votes cast in those very important local races (including school board).
- Negatively impact a jurisdiction’s ability to close polls on time.

Primary elections exist to allow voters to scrutinize candidates and choose the most qualified to represent their political party in the General Election.

The Maryland General Assembly has made numerous changes to election law and voting processes in recent years (Early Voting, Mail-In Voting, Drop Off Boxes, Same Day Voter Registration and Voting, etc.) with no increase in voter turnout, the main justification for those changes. A review of the Maryland State Board of Elections' Official Turnout Reports for the 2022 General Election, voter turnout was down 10 percent statewide from the 2018 General Election.

The decrease in voter turnout (2018 vs 2022) was greatest in Maryland’s largest counties, where turnout dropped 10 to 15 percent:

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>% Drop Off in Voting</i>
Prince George’s County	15%
Charles County	13%
Montgomery County	12%
Baltimore City	11%
Baltimore County	10%
Howard County	10%

Both Approval Voting and Ranked Choice Voting will confuse voters, undermine confidence in the election process, and make people question election results. Approval Voting degrades the sacred duty of voting for our elected officials to a popularity contest. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is confusing and manipulative.

At this time of severe budget constraints, spending money on a Task Force to implement either Approval Voting or Ranked Choice Voting is wasteful, especially when budget areas such as aid for the developmentally disabled and pre-school scholarships are being cut.

We don’t need a Task Force to tell Marylanders that these alternative voting methods will cost more time and tax dollars with no positive impacts on their sacred right to vote.

We already have the most democratic voting process – the candidate receiving the most votes (without complicated elimination rounds) wins.

For all of these reasons, please vote an **UNFAVORABLE** report on **HB1289**.

Sincerely,

Ella Ennis
 Legislative Co-Chair
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Sharon Carrick
 Legislative Co-Chair
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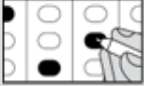
Sample ballot -- 2024 -- City of Portland OR

Official Ballot
Multnomah County
November 5, 2024


3303-1

THIS IS NOT A REAL BALLOT. DO NOT USE TO VOTE.


Ranked Choice Voting Instructions
 Use a blue or black pen.



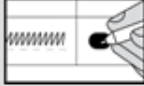
Rank candidates in the order of your choice.



Fill in no more than one oval in a rank column.



Fill in no more than one oval on a candidate row.



To add a candidate who is not on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the write-in line and fill in a rank.

City of Portland, Mayor [4-year term]
 Rank up to 6 candidates in the order of your choice.

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6
Durrell Kinsey Bey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Martin Ward	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keith Wilson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dustin Witherspoon	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Michael O'Callaghan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Liv (Viva) Østhus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rene Gonzalez	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alexander Landry Neely	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Michael Necula	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharon Nasset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sadiq Ali	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
James Atkinson IV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
She/Meka (BeUtee) As-Salaam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mingus Mapps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
James Macdonald	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Josh Leake	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yao Jun He	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Michael Hayes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carmen Rubio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

City of Portland, Auditor [2-year term]
 Rank up to 2 candidates in the order of your choice.

	Rank 1	Rank 2
Simone Rede	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Actual ballot used in 2024 -- State of Maine

CG District 1 SS District 27 SR District 116 Cumberland District 4

State of Maine Official Ballot General Election, November 5, 2024

Instructions to Voters

To vote, fill in the oval like this: ●

To rank your candidate choices, fill in the oval:

- + In the 1st column for your 1st choice candidate.
- + In the 2nd column for your 2nd choice candidate, and so on.

Continue until you have ranked as many or as few candidates as you like.

Fill in only one oval in each column (ranking).

To rank a Write-in candidate, write the person's name in the Write-in space and fill in the oval for the ranking of your choice.

To have your vote count, do not erase or cross out your choice.

If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot.

President Vice President	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice
Harris, Kamala D. Walz, Tim Democratic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Oliver, Chase ter Maat, Mike Libertarian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stein, Jill Ware, Rudolph Green Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trump, Donald J. Vance, James D. Republican	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
West, Cornel Abdullah, Melina Justice for All	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-in:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

