

February 16, 2026

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 Government, Labor, and Elections Committee Members:

I urge your support for **HB 580**, *Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 1-26* that would authorize the Montgomery County Council to adopt and implement ranked choice or approval voting for elections for local offices in Montgomery County.

The results of the last two Democratic Primary elections (2018 and 2022) for County Executive and County Council demonstrate that a better voting method is necessary to determine which candidates have the support of a majority of voters. Thirty-three candidates ran for four Council at large seats in 2018 with the winning four garnering from 7.4 percent to 12.2 percent of the vote. Ranked voting would have been able to determine which four candidates were supported by closer to 25 percent of the vote by factoring in the second and possibly third choice of the voter.

This is enabling legislation that only applies to local offices in Montgomery County and is supported widely by county leaders, city leaders, community organizations, and residents. It would allow the county to use a voting method that addresses issues that have happened repeatedly in county elections over the last decade.

We all unconsciously apply ranked choice voting in our everyday lives. If the local ice cream shop is out of our favorite flavor, we choose another. Given a little voter education, voters will quickly understand how it works.

I am a lifelong Montgomery County resident and have voted in every election since I was eligible to vote in the 1960s. I believe in being an active and informed citizen.

I urge the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to give HB 580 full consideration and a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Mary A. Lanigan
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