

August 3, 2026

Testimony on SB 2100 and HB 2100
Election Districts - General Assembly and Representative in Congress
Education, Energy, and the Environment
Government, Labor, and Elections

Position: Informational

Common Cause Maryland takes no formal position on SB 2100/HB 2100, which would add a question regarding Maryland's procedure for congressional redistricting to the November ballot.

We recognize that President Trump and Republican leaders are pursuing a calculated, asymmetric strategy to redraw districts mid-decade in states to lock in unaccountable power and **silence voters**. And while we remain opposed to partisan gerrymandering, we understand that Maryland has a role to play in this national fight and that we should consider counterbalancing measures like that laid out in this legislation. But the people of Maryland are the top priority and **we cannot continue to silence voters when it comes to filling legislative vacancies**. Inaction on this reform means that this flawed process will remain the same until 2032.

While Maryland is a leader in expanding opportunities and access to ensure that every citizen can engage in this critical building block of a democratic government, this is not the case when filling legislative vacancies in the General Assembly. The vacant seats are ultimately filled by the local central committee of the former legislator's party which are largely made up of political insiders. Their process for selecting an individual to be considered by the Governor includes little to no public input or even adequate public access to the decision-making process unless that voter is following and engaged in their local political party. Unaffiliated voters and those from other parties also have no opportunity to meaningfully engage in the process.

During the regular 2026 legislative session, both the Senate and House passed legislation that would improve the process for filling these vacancies, ensuring no appointed individual can serve a full term without voter input. **The legislation passed with near unanimous bipartisan support in the Senate and overwhelming support in the House.** Politics as usual, including mid-decade redistricting efforts, led to this critical legislation ultimately dying before ratification in the final hours of Sine Die. And during this special legislative session, even with overwhelming support in both chambers, legislators have chosen not to make this effort a priority reflecting a lack of political will.

Common Cause Maryland has led the fight to improve the process for filling legislative vacancies for nearly a decade, working with prior sponsors to develop a compromise based on feedback from legislators. The compromise would allow central committees to remain in the

process. Even with this change, the General Assembly has decided that it can choose when the voices of Maryland voters matter.

It is our view that delaying on this issue knowing that there won't be another opportunity for the voters to approve the measure until 2028 - **meaning the first special election could not be held until 2032 at the very earliest** - is an unfortunate unforced error on the part of the General Assembly. Especially considering that for the past two years the Senate has passed its version of the special elections bill almost unanimously, and this past session the House passed its version with majority bipartisan support.

We know that it isn't just the advocates who are pushing for this - Maryland voters have made it clear time and time again that they want to have the ultimate say when it comes to choosing who will represent them in Annapolis. In our 2024 Gonzales poll, a full **85% of Marylanders said that they were in favor of special elections to full legislative vacancies**. You listened to them as you were seeking office during the June 2026 election. Listen to them now and give them an opportunity to improve this process on the ballot this November.

Maryland should fight back against the mid-decade redistricting effort being led by Trump and the Republican party but your responsibility is to Maryland voters first. The right to select by majority vote the elected officials who should represent them in office is one of our most fundamental Constitutional rights. It is past time that lawmakers take steps to begin shifting the power of choice back to the people of Maryland. **Before the special legislative session comes to an end, introduce and quickly pass legislation that would ensure voters always have a say in who represents them in Annapolis.**