

February 6, 2026

Written Testimony on HB 580
Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 1-26
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
145 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Position: Favorable

Dear Government, Labor, and Elections Committee Members:

My name is Julie A. Rosen, and I submit this written testimony as an individual resident of Montgomery County, Maryland (MD District 16), and a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, MD State Project Advocacy Committee. I write to urge your support for **HB 580, *Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 1-26***. I'm also a mathematician who knows 'a thing or two' about the beauty, efficiency, and transparency of Ranked Choice Voting. I believe the time is right to allow Montgomery County to move forward using voting methods that may be 'new' to county residents, but proven beneficial for local and state-level elections in other US states and provincial areas in other countries.

Given the ongoing 'battles' with Federal Administration representatives on proven-trusted elections, we need to strengthen our democracy and empower local innovation to do so. I understand HB 580 is an enabling bill that will allow the county to take the next steps at the local level to explore a voting method that addresses issues that have happened repeatedly in our county's elections over the last decade. For example,

- Since 2014, every Democratic Primary County Executive race was won with less than a majority.
- In 2022, 4 out of 7 Primary winners in district races won with less than a majority.

And this year, because of competitive races for county council and county executive, we may see split votes and non-majority winners in the upcoming 2026 primaries again. We need to strengthen voters' trust in a democracy that better supports competitive elections, turns down the temperature on negative campaigning, and empowers voters to have a stronger voice to elect and hold leaders accountable.

I'm not the only one with this position: (i) The Montgomery County House Delegation voted unanimously in favor of HB1094 during the 2025 session (proposed legislation precursor to HB580);; and (ii) The bill is supported widely by county leaders, city leaders, community organizations, and residents. Additionally, and beyond the benefits projected by this bill, I believe it will not have an adverse impact on the 2026 election: (i) As an enabling legislation, HB 580 does not mandate the use of a new voting method; and (ii) HB 580 would go into effect in January 2027, after the 2026 Primary and Gubernatorial elections.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB580. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Julie A. Rosen, Ph.D.