



Testimony - HB 50, General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office
Favorable

House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

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Director of Political & Legislative Affairs on Behalf of SEIU Local 500

Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee:

On behalf of SEIU Local 500, which represents tens of thousands of public service and education workers across Maryland, we respectfully submit the following favorable testimony in support of House Bill 50.

SEIU Local 500 strongly supports HB 50 because it strengthens democratic accountability and ensures that Maryland voters—rather than political insiders—have a timely voice in choosing their representatives in the General Assembly.

Under current law, legislative vacancies are routinely filled by appointment for the remainder of a term, even when a vacancy occurs early enough to allow for a fair and efficient election. HB 50 provides a balanced and commonsense reform: when a vacancy occurs with sufficient time before the second-year statewide election, voters are given the opportunity to elect their Delegate or Senator during the regularly scheduled primary and general elections. This approach respects both administrative efficiency and the fundamental principle of representative democracy.

For working people, representation matters. Decisions made in the General Assembly directly affect wages, benefits, workplace safety, education funding, and public services. When a legislative seat is filled for years without a vote of the people, workers lose a meaningful opportunity to hold their elected officials accountable. HB 50 helps close that gap by ensuring that appointments are temporary when an election is feasible.

Importantly, HB 50 does not eliminate the appointment process altogether. It preserves continuity of government by allowing the Governor to appoint an interim legislator, while making clear that long-term service should be determined by the electorate whenever possible. This is a responsible and thoughtful reform that balances stability with democracy.

SEIU Local 500 believes that Maryland's democracy is strongest when voter participation is maximized and when elected officials are chosen at the ballot box. HB 50 moves the state in that direction.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on House Bill 50.

Our Executive Director, Travis Simon, would like to extend a special thank you to Delegate Foley for her leadership on this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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SEIU Local 500