

House Bill 496 Written Testimony in Support

Title: Election Law - Unaffiliated Voters - Open Primary Elections

Sponsored by Delegates Qi and Schmidt

Status: In the House - Hearing 2/11 at 2:00 p.m.

Written Testimony:

I want to express my very strong desire for the opportunity to participate in primary elections. Elections should be about individual character and competence, something that is not determined by party affiliation. As an un-affiliated centrist, I sincerely believe that my voice, and the voice of many like me, is desperately needed in today's polarized environment to help stem the ever-increasing slide to far right or far left politics. It is not healthy for any democracy for politicians to believe they serve only their party's base. Opening up primaries to non-affiliated voters will help moderate our politics and remind politicians that we are all Marylanders.

As a Maryland taxpayer, it should be my right to have a voice in choosing representation. Isn't it the state that runs elections? It currently seems that the two predominant political parties make the rules. Why should I have to commit to choosing one of two extremely flawed political parties to have a say in who should be on the final ballot?

Thank you for considering this long-overdue change to Maryland voting. Please also consider implementing rank choice voting to further improve Maryland's election system.

Respectfully, Stephen Sullivan, Catonsville, MD