

Testimony - HB0580 (FAV)

Bonnie Liu
14421 Rich Branch Drive
North Potomac, MD 20878

My name is Bonnie Liu. I've lived in Montgomery County for almost 20 years, first in Rockville and now in North Potomac, with my husband, who grew up here, and we're very fortunate to be raising our kids here as well.

When I was a kid myself, and first learned about presidential elections, I thought that whoever got the second-most votes would become the vice president. When I found out that the "runner-up" actually gets nothing, it seemed profoundly unfair. It made no sense to me that no matter how many people had voted for the losing candidate, their votes and opinions essentially didn't matter.

As an adult, of course, I understand why things don't work this way. But I still believe that when elections are strictly a two-way contest, pitting one side against another, we lose sight of the fact that we're all on the same side. Voters should still have a voice, even when they don't get their first choice.

This is why I'm asking for your support of HB0580: because ranked choice voting simply makes sense. Letting people vote in order of preference gives them the freedom to support all the candidates and ideas they believe in, rather than just the one they think is most likely to win.

Ranked choice voting also encourages more candidates to run, without fear of dividing support for others with whom they're closely aligned on the issues, and thus inadvertently giving an advantage to someone whose ideas they oppose. This approach creates a larger, more diverse pool of candidates, with a wider range of ideas and experience, which in turn gives voters better representation, and encourages candidates to seek consensus and compromise, with both their colleagues and their constituents.

And as much as these things matter at the national level, they are exponentially more important and impactful at the local level, because the issues that people care about most are the ones that affect us and our communities every day. When we know that our opinions on these issues truly count, we are more invested in the process, and more satisfied with the outcomes.

I believe two of Montgomery County's greatest assets are its diversity and its sense of community, and ranked choice voting strengthens both. When we can vote according to our true preferences, we discover our shared goals. And the more ideas and solutions we can bring to the table, the easier it becomes to accomplish them. Your support of HB0580 will help further these goals. Thank you so much for your time.