

**Testimony on House Bill 50 – Favorable**  
HB50 – General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office  
Government, Labor, and Elections Committee  
February 2, 2026

Dear Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee,

My name is Michelle Koul, and I am a constituent of District 31. I am writing **in support of HB50 – General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office.**

In 2017, the importance of state-level politics as a means to protect us from federal chaos became clear. Therefore, who we have representing us is more important than ever. After a contentious appointment to a vacant Senate position in District 30, and the appointment of a candidate to a vacant delegate position to District 31 who could not win her recent Board of Education race, I became aware of how these appointments enable favorites of each party to leapfrog over the will of Maryland voters. After digging deeper, I learned that 1 in 4 members of the Maryland General Assembly are initially appointed to their seats to fill vacancies, rather than being elected by voters!<sup>1</sup> While these appointees need to be elected eventually, the benefit of being an incumbent with name recognition is clearly an advantage. Finally, Marylanders are overwhelmingly in favor of holding special elections, just as it's done in many other states.<sup>2</sup>

Please submit a favorable report on **HB50 – General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
*Dr. Michelle Koul (she/her)*  
Severna Park, MD 21146

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2023/11/26/appointments-maryland-general-assembly/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.commoncause.org/maryland/press/maryland-house-fails-voters-on-special-elections/>