

HB0333\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/11/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

**TESTIMONY ON HB#/0333- POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**General Assembly Vacancy - Political Party Central Committee – Procedures**

**TO:** Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0333, **General Assembly Vacancy - Political Party Central Committee – Procedures**

If there is a vacancy in the [Maryland General Assembly](#), the [governor](#) is responsible for appointing a replacement.

The governor makes an appointment based on the recommendations of the political party committee that holds the vacant seat. The political party committee has up to 30 days after the vacancy to submit a list of recommended candidates to the governor. If the party committee fails to act by the 30-day deadline, or if the former officeholder was not affiliated with any party, the governor has 15 days to appoint a person from the political party that last held the seat. The person appointed to the seat serves for the remainder of the unfilled term. <sup>1</sup>

As documented by an AI query: <sup>2</sup>

Recent, more specific data from early 2026 suggests that roughly **13-15%** of the specific House and Senate chambers were filled via appointment as of February 2026, though the figure is higher in specific regions, such as Montgomery County, where analysis has shown up to 40% of their local delegation was initially appointed.

Thus, the current system lets a party committee make a decision without public notice or input on the selection and lets current members of that party leadership vote for themselves to fill the empty office. To add more public input and make the process fairer for the citizens of the affected jurisdiction this bill will establish requirements for the filling of a vacancy in the office of Senator or Delegate in the General Assembly by a central committee of a political party under the Maryland Constitution relating to applications, public notice, public meetings, and voting; and requiring a member of the central committee who has applied to fill the vacancy to recuse themselves from voting on the individual to fill the vacancy.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0333.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ballotpedia.org/How\\_vacancies\\_are\\_filled\\_in\\_state\\_legislatures#Maryland](https://ballotpedia.org/How_vacancies_are_filled_in_state_legislatures#Maryland)

<sup>2</sup> Google Search “how many current maryland general assembly seats were filled by appointment instead of an election”