

HB 350 Voting Rights Act of 2026 – Counties and Municipal Corporations

Position: Favorable

February 11, 2026

To the Honorable Chair and members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

My name is Lesley Frost and I am the Chair of National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland State Policy Advocacy Committee (NCJW MD SPA). I am writing, on behalf of our 600 advocates across the state, to express strong support for HB 350 to enact protections against racial vote dilution in Maryland.

Racial vote dilution happens when electoral practices, such as at-large elections or unfair district maps, weaken the voting strength of voters of color, effectively denying them and their communities meaningful political participation. The protections outlined in HB 350 are essential to ensuring that all Marylanders, particularly those from historically disenfranchised communities, have the equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice

For over sixty years, the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 served as the nation's most effective tool for tackling discriminatory voting practices, yet the federal government is not only failing to protect against intimidation and discrimination in our voting processes, but is actively advancing anti-voter policies. At a time when federal voting rights protections have been weakened and enforcement has become increasingly uncertain, Maryland legislators have both the authority and the responsibility to safeguard fair and equal access to the ballot.

Combatting vote dilution is an important and necessary step towards making a vision of a government that is truly of, by, and for the people a reality. When voters of color are systematically prevented from electing the candidates of their choice, entire communities are left without a voice in decisions that directly impact their lives.

HB 350 strengthens Maryland's democratic institutions, honors the legacy of the federal Voting Rights Act, and fulfills NCJW's resolution to "promote racial justice and eliminate systemic racism and discrimination." For these reasons, we respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 350.

Sincerely,
Lesley Frost
Chair NCJW MD SPA, ncjw.mdacts@gmail.com

7707 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda MD 20814, lesleyfrost0@gmail.com

