



February 18, 2026

Testimony To the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Re: HB0580 – Montgomery County – Voting Methods MC 1-26

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

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) urges you to support HB 580 – Montgomery County – Voting Methods MC 1-26, which authorizes the Montgomery County Council to use ranked choice voting (RCV) in elections for local offices in Montgomery County.

The League was founded on the belief that voters play a critical role in a democracy. RCV maximizes this ability by ensuring that winning candidates have support from a majority of voters. The League of Women Voters of Maryland believes it is important that election systems: 1) produce representation that reflects community sentiment; 2) help increase voter participation by encouraging a broader range of candidates and more civil campaigns and 3) are feasible to implement. For these reasons, the League supports the use of RCV.

Montgomery County voters would have found RCV to be very useful in the 2022 primary election when Democratic voters had to choose four Democratic candidates from a total of eight vying for the County Council at-large seat and one Democratic candidate from among four running for County Executive. The ultimate winner of the latter race won with less than 40% of the total votes cast, and the top two candidates were separated by only 35 votes (less than 0.025%). Using RCV would have determined which of those two candidates received 50 percent or more of voters' first and subsequent choices.

- RCV empowers voters because it allows them to vote for their true first-choice candidate without feeling as though they might be “wasting” their vote.
- RCV empowers elected officials because they have a stronger mandate and more accountability when they know they are supported by a majority (at least 50%) of voters.
- RCV encourages more civil, less negative campaigns because candidates need to appeal to their opponents' supporters for their second-choice votes.

The LWVMC strongly urges the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to support HB0580.

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