

HB0580 - Montgomery County – Voting Methods

Position - Favorable

February 16, 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) and I am writing to express strong support for HB0580 - Montgomery County – Voting Methods, authorizing Montgomery County to use new voting methods, and allow county residents and leaders the power to choose a system that works best for them.

HB 580 is important enabling legislation, that does not mandate the use of a specific new voting method and would not go into effect until January 2027. Our current system has, in every Democratic Primary County Executive race since 2014, been won with less than a majority of the vote, and in 2022, 4 out of 7 Primary winners in district races won with less than a majority. A 2024 random sample survey conducted by the polling firm YouGov states that in the sample of registered voters, an overwhelming 86 percent of respondents said it is very or somewhat important “that the winning candidate in the election has a majority of the votes cast.”

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), an alternative to the current method, is a party-neutral and candidate-neutral tool. Its job is to produce a majority winner with the widest and deepest support from any field of more than two candidates. An updated 2025 report from American Bar Association states that research provides evidence that RCV is an improvement over plurality voting with clear benefits in terms of representation, campaign quality, mobilization, and turnout. Research shows that RCV encourages greater consensus building as well as more civil political campaigns.

NCJW is the oldest Jewish grassroots organization in the United States, and guided by our Jewish texts and values, we work under our resolutions to support “safe, easy and equitable access to the ballot and eliminate obstacles to the electoral process.....”.

NCJW MD SPA supports Montgomery County’s embrace of innovation and its desire to embrace reforms that lead to a more democratic voting method that will strengthen elections. We urge the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to give HB 580 full consideration and a favorable report.

Sincerely,
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