



MARYLAND FORWARD PARTY

Not Left. Not Right. Forward.

BILL NO: HB0050

TITLE: General Assembly – Special Elections to Fill a Vacancy in Office

COMMITTEE: Government, Labor and Elections

POSITION: FAVORABLE

DATE: February 4, 2026

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee

FROM: Maryland Forward Party

SUBJECT: General Assembly - Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office

Maryland Forward Party, representing a growing coalition including the state's large Unaffiliated population, **supports HB0050**, which moves Maryland toward a more democratic process for filling General Assembly vacancies.

While we appreciate its pragmatic approach to mitigating costs by utilizing existing election dates, we respectfully offer three policy recommendations for future consideration:

1. **Citizens' Assemblies:** Appointing a successor to fulfill the remainder of a term circumvents the rights of the people in that jurisdiction to choose their representation. While HB050 is a significant improvement, Citizens' Assemblies would better represent the public will. These bodies allow independent, diverse groups of Marylanders to debate and determine appointments, minimizing partisan control over vacancies.
2. **Municipal Alignment:** We recommend expanding the bill's scope to include vacancies in the first and third years of a term by utilizing Municipal election cycles. This would allow more vacancies to be filled democratically while maintaining the bill's fiscal responsibility.
3. **Ranked Choice Voting:** To maximize state resources and voter representation, we urge the use of single, all-candidate elections using Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for these vacancies. RCV ensures that the winner has majority support, which is critical for someone entering office mid-term, and Maryland's voting machines already support this capacity.

Maryland Forward Party believes that every Marylander, regardless of party, deserves a direct say in their representation. We thank the sponsor for this initiative and urge a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Lee Bradshaw

Legislative Committee Chair

Maryland Forward Party