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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0350- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Voting Rights Act of 2026 - Counties and Municipal Corporations

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#/0350, **Voting Rights Act of 2026 - Counties and Municipal Corporations**

This bill is submitted to protect voting rights of protected classes in Maryland from the significant threat to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 from the current United States Supreme Court. In their report on the issue by NPR “60 years later, Voting Rights Act protections for minority voters face new threats”¹

At a time when the Justice Department under the Trump administration has [backed off from voting rights lawsuits](#) the department had brought when former President Joe Biden was in office, the prospect of voters of color no longer being allowed to bring their own cases has supporters of the Voting Rights Act concerned about the law's survival.

Maryland needs to ensure that, if the Supreme Court buys a novel argument being made to overturn this protection, that Maryland will continue to protect voter rights for all currently covered groups under the existing act. It will accomplish this by prohibiting the imposition or application of a method for electing the governing body of a county or municipal corporation that impairs the ability of members of a protected class to elect candidates of the members' choice or influence the outcome of an election by diluting or abridging the rights of voters who are members of a protected class. The NPR report declares “Given *Shelby County* and what this decision could potentially do, there won't be much left for the Voting Rights Act — words on a page.”²

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0350.

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2025/08/06/nx-s1-5482864/scotus-voting-rights-act-8th-circuit-vra>

² *ibid*