



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

[www.womensdemocraticclub.org](http://www.womensdemocraticclub.org)

**HB0580: Montgomery County - Voting Methods MC 1-26**

**Government, Labor and Elections Committee – February 18, 2026  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club** (WDC) for the 2026 legislative session. WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials.

WDC urges a favorable report of HB0580 (MC 1-26). This bill authorizes Montgomery County to implement a ranked choice voting system for local offices.

We support ranked choice voting (RCV) for three reasons:

- 1) RCV makes elections more representative of voters' preferences
- 2) RCV balances the scales for women and candidates from marginalized backgrounds
- 3) RCV disincentivizes negative campaigning that turns people away from participating

The purpose of democracy is to have a government that represents the will of the people. When a candidate can win with a minority of the vote - sometimes less than 20% in Montgomery County - we fail to meet this bar. RCV ensures that the candidate elected enters office with a mandate from the people they represent.

Moreover, studies by [Fair Vote](#) and [Represent Women](#) show that RCV systems lessen the systemic disadvantages that women and people of color face as candidates. After implementing RCV, cities like New York and Minneapolis-St. Paul saw significant increases in the diversity of their city councils. When people do not need to worry about 'splitting' their votes among multiple candidates who reflect their experiences and values, we get a government that better reflects its constituents.

Finally, ranked choice voting builds trust in government and invites more people into the political process by disincentivizing negative campaigning. [Studies](#) show that the more uncivil the political process becomes, the more people are turned off by the idea of getting involved in it. RCV [incentivizes](#) candidates to run positive campaigns that appeal to all voters, not just the narrow sliver that would win them the election in the current system.

**We ask for your support for HB0580 (MC 1-26).**

Cynthia Rubenstein  
WDC President

Dorothy Manevich  
WDC Advancing Democracy  
Subcommittee

Kate Stein  
WDC Advocacy Chair