

## SB0089 Municipalities - Vacancies in Elected Offices

Stance: Favorable

Testimony: My name is Adiena C. Britt and I reside in the 45<sup>th</sup> Legislative District of Baltimore City. I am writing to offer my support for SB0089 requiring a special election to be held in the event a vacancy occurs in an elected office. In the past several years, MD residents have been subjected to the two committees being able to be the sole entity to vote in a replacement for a vacant seat. They “open the floor” for candidates to “apply” but normally have someone in the mix that they’d rather just appoint. I witnessed this in my District for the vacancy that was created by the indictment of Cheryl Glenn.

A notice was sent out that required to be shared, that there would be a meeting for the Democratic Committee for Baltimore City to be able to choose her replacement. Though, district residents were encouraged to come, it was only circulated by a handful of people and the room where it was held only held about 100 or so people. Several people applied, including the daughter of one of the other Delegates for the district, who also had a seat on said committee.

The people who “interviewed” were presented with a series of curious questions, as well as some good ones. They had no idea what the questions would be so couldn’t prepare, yet the “candidate” who sat on the panel had knowledge of what would be asked. This was an unfair advantage. The constituents in the room were not allowed to vote, only the committee members. The people in the room seemed to like a small number of candidates, and there were as many as three strong candidates who seemed more qualified than the one who sat on the committee. When the “vote” occurred, two of these candidates and the person who held a chair were the top three vote getters. The top two “tied” with the same number of votes, so they decided to knock everyone else out of the mix and have another vote. When all was said and done, the more qualified candidate “lost” the nomination to the seat because Chanel Branch was able to vote, for herself. She was allowed to cast the tie breaking and deciding vote for herself. That should NEVER have occurred. Never. The only people who left there happy were the committee board members. Everyone else was livid because we were lured out in the cold to witness a dog and pony show. They already had their minds made up, and we had a person thrust upon us for representation who has been quite absent from advocacy and representation since.

Just a note that I am very active in community issues and email my representatives on quite a number of matters that mean a lot to me. She is not only unresponsive, but I have yet to see anything that she has sponsored or co-sponsored as far as legislation. It’s like a ghost in a seat, and this should never be the case. The constituents of a district should never be subjected to someone thrust upon them, only to turn around and be non-responsive and do absolutely nothing with the power and position they were handed.

Please allow this to pass through committee and be brought forth to the full Senate and House to be voted into Law.

Thank you.

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