



## TESTIMONY FOR SB0413 Voting Rights Act of 2022 – Counties and Municipalities

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Sydnor

**Committee:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Cecilia Plante, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0413 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members believe strongly is the right to vote of every person. As a democratic Republic, we should always take steps to ensure that right. However, we seem to have taken a wrong turn as a country, and there are many states who are trying their level best to disenfranchise whole members of their populations based on their race, ethnicity, or language.

In this day of repression of rights, it is important to affirm that Maryland is still a democratic state, that respects and supports the rights of all of its citizens to vote.

This bill simply states – ‘A method for electing the governing body of a county (or a municipality) may not be imposed or applied in a manner that impairs the ability of members of a protected class to elect candidates of the members’ choice, or the members’ ability to influence the outcome of an election, as a result of the dilution or the abridgement of the rights of voters who are members of a protected class.’ In other words, it requires that counties or municipalities do not change the rules that govern an election in order to exclude minorities from voting.

This is the essence of democracy.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.