



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 362 Montgomery County – Voting Methods
Ways and Means Committee – February 8, 2022
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 2022 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County, with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB362, authorizing the Montgomery County Council to adopt ranked choice voting (RCV) method or an approval voting method for three reasons:

HB 362/MC 13-22 would empower local government to respond to local needs. Montgomery County has a history of elected officials who won multi-candidate primaries with less than a majority of votes. The proposed legislation has the unanimous support of the County Council and House Delegation. The proposed law already has considerable support among Montgomery County citizens, the County would offer voter education, and grassroots groups in the County are already organized to educate voters as well.

RCV and similar voting approaches give voters a clearer way to express their preferences. RCV is a proven voting method used in jurisdictions across the US, around the world, and in Takoma Park, MD.

Both Maryland and Montgomery County lag shamefully in gender parity among elected officials at all levels. Maryland rates a "D" grade in the [Gender Parity Index](#) created and compiled by [Represent Women](#). No women were elected to at-large County Council positions in 2018 and just one woman currently serves on the Council; she is departing at the end of 2022 because of term limits. Montgomery County has never had a female County Executive, nor a female State's Attorney nor a female Sheriff. In contrast, according to Represent Women's research, half of cities that use RCV have elected women mayors; nearly half (49%) of all city council members elected in RCV elections are women. These data are consistent with the pattern shown in early RCV research – in RCV elections, more women run and more women win, especially Black women.

We ask for your support for HB 362 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Respectfully,

Leslie Milano
President