

**House Bill 563**  
**FAVORABLE**  
**General Assembly Vacancy - Political Party Central Committees – Procedures**  
**House of Delegates, Ways and Means Committee**

February 17, 2023

Submitted by Seth Grimes, Montgomery County, Maryland

Chair Atterbeary and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Seth Grimes. I am a Montgomery County resident and a member of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, speaking only for myself.

I support HB 563 as a step to promote transparency, accountability, and fairness in the legislative-vacancy appointment process.

The bill ensures an adequate minimum application period, for candidates to step forward to apply for vacancy appointment.

It requires a central committee to take sensible steps to advertise vacancies and, by requiring translation into languages other than English based on local standards, promotes applications from currently under-represented populations.

The requirement that applications be posted online facilitates public participation in what is currently an insider process. That applications be available online for at least thirty days after a central-committee vote promotes nomination accountability, as does requiring that the nomination meetings be announced and open to the public with public disclosure of each member’s vote.

Finally, the central-committee-member vote-recusal requirement advances appointment fairness.

HB 563 promotes transparency, accountability, and fairness in the vacancy-nomination process and beneficially creates uniformity across the state. I urge a favorable committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

One additional point: I have proposed that the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee, of which I am a member, adopt a position in support of “special elections as the most democratic method to fill Maryland General Assembly vacancies that occur during the four-year legislative term.” I urge you all to back special elections to fill legislative vacancies, to move Maryland away from the insider politics that HB 563 seeks to ameliorate. Vacancies should be filled by direct, popular voting in keeping with our shared democratic ideals.

*Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@gmail.com*