

**January 30, 2024**

**Testimony on SB 29  
Special Elections – Procedures and General Assembly Vacancies and Ties  
Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**Position:** Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports SB 29. If approved by voters, this legislation would amend the state Constitution to require a special election to fill seats vacated by members of the Maryland General Assembly in any instance where a vacancy occurs outside of a year in which the General Assembly is elected.

Under current law, in the event of a vacancy in the General Assembly, the Governor may appoint their replacement who may then fill that office for the duration of the office's term. While an adequate solution in some situations, in others this leads to legislators filling nearly and entire term without giving constituents the chance to choose their representative. SB 29 would correct this issue by requiring special primary and general elections conducted by mail be held to fill the vacancy unless there is already a primary and general election scheduled for that calendar year. This gives Maryland voters the opportunity to have a say in who will represent them and their interests, and would move the state towards a more democratic process for when these vacancies do occur.

SB 29 is a straightforward bill that helps shift the power to fill legislative vacancies from the executive to the voters of Maryland, and for that reason we urge a favorable report.