



TESTIMONY FOR SB0029

Special Elections – Procedures and General Assembly Vacancies and Ties

Bill Sponsor: Senator Kagan

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0029 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 would like to ensure, as much as possible, that *their* vote for candidates for the General Assembly is what elects its members. We understand that events happen that cause a duly elected member of the General Assembly to vacate their seat between election cycles. If a seat is vacated early in the term, the constituents of that district should be able to re-elect a new representative.

This bill would require the Governor to call a special election for a vacancy in the legislature as long as the vacancy does not occur within an election year. The special election (both primary and general election) would be carried out by mail. If the vacancy occurs within an election year, the current appointment process would remain in effect. We believe that this will ensure that the replacement member will only serve out the term if it is too late to announce candidacy for the next Primary or General election.

Overall, this bill will give the constituents of Maryland more of a voice in electing their representatives. Which is what is supposed to happen in a democratic society.

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