



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of Montgomery County, MD, Inc.

**Statement to the Montgomery County Delegation for the November 30,
2015 House Local Bills Hearing**

Re: Concerning local bill MC 15-16 Ranked Choice Voting

To: Members of the Montgomery County House Delegation in the General Assembly

From: Linna Barnes, President LWVMC

POSITION: Support with Amendment

Consistent with our testimony last year on bill MC 22-15, the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County supports MC 15-16 Ranked Choice Voting for its use of instant run-off voting to fill vacancies when special elections are held.

Where more than two candidates are running for a single seat, voters should be allowed to rank the candidates in order of their preference. In this system, if no candidate received a majority of first-choice votes, the candidate with the lowest number of first-choice votes would be eliminated and the second-choice votes on those ballots would be added to the remaining candidates. This procedure would continue until a candidate received a majority of votes.

This process would ensure that the person elected has substantial support from a majority of voters. Otherwise, when multiple candidates seek election to the vacant seat, it would be necessary to conduct a primary as well as a general election or to settle for electing the person who receives the greatest number of votes, which may be much less than a majority of voters. A candidate elected by that method may not reflect the views of the majority of voters and could, in fact, be a representative of a narrow interest group.

In addition, we recommend that you amend the types of offices covered by this bill to include school board vacancies, or add to MC 2-16 a provision authorizing ranked choice voting for special elections for the Board of Education.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.