

**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
HB 624 Montgomery County – Voting Methods**

POSITION: Support

FROM: Nancy Bliss, President, League of Women Voters of Montgomery County

DATE: February 19, 2019

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County supports ranked choice voting.

The League was founded on the belief that voters should play a critical role in democracy: ranked choice voting maximizes that ability because it ensures that winning candidates have support from a majority of voters.

Ranked choice voting—

- **empowers voters** -- because it allows them to vote for their true first-choice candidate without feeling like they might be “wasting” their vote
- **empowers elected officials** -- because they will have a stronger mandate and more accountability when they know they are supported by a majority of voters
- **encourages more civilized, less negative campaigns** -- because candidates will need to appeal to their opponents’ supporters for their second-choice votes.

Over the past 20 years, the League of Women Voters has repeatedly supported ranked choice voting. At least 14 state and local Leagues -- including the Leagues in Maryland and Montgomery County -- have supported ranked choice voting. In Maine -- where the recent use of ranked choice voting has been widely-recognized as a success -- the League of Women Voters helped pass that enabling legislation.

Montgomery County is ready for ranked choice voting. We urge a favorable report on HB 624. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.