

## Judy Penny

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**From:** Barry Jackson <bjackson@rockvillemd.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 2:33 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Fw: Election Discussion

Here is a comment on the election that I received from Art Stigile who was a campaign treasurer last election and I believe previous ones.



Rise Together

**Barry Jackson**  
COUNCILMEMBER  
**City of Rockville**  
C: 202-641-4018  
P: 240-314-8295  
[www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)



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**From:** Art Stigile <artstigile@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 13, 2025 2:26 PM  
**To:** Barry Jackson <bjackson@rockvillemd.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Election Discussion

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Hi Barry,

Just uncovered a note to myself about election materials. This probably isn't a Code issue. I wish the electronic campaign instructions that the Staff provide to each campaign had a useful table of contents with bookmarks. It's so hard finding info in that document.

Best,  
Art Stigile

## Judy Penny

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**Subject:** FW: Election feedback from resident

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**From:** Barry Jackson <[bjackson@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:bjackson@rockvillemd.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, June 11, 2025 3:45 PM

**To:** City Clerk <[City\\_Clerk@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:City_Clerk@rockvillemd.gov)>

**Cc:** Jeff Mihelich <[jmihelich@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:jmihelich@rockvillemd.gov)>

**Subject:** Election feedback from resident

I got this from someone in Rockville who has input into the election discussion. Please pass this along to the consultant:

1. •

BSE -- I appreciate the effort and expertise of this group. They've done a fantastic job implementing vote-by-mail, which I enthusiastically support. They are responsive and considerate. They respond slowly during the fall campaign, but I can't fault a volunteer group for that, especially given the number of candidates. I wonder if there is some way to lighten their workload?

2. •

How to report fees paid by contributors when using an online platform to make a contribution. My analysis was that since the campaign did not directly pay the fee, the campaign should not report the fee as a contribution. The BSE agreed. This is especially important when the contribution is at the \$1000 maximum level because the contribution plus the fee would exceed the max. This should be clarified in the Code.

3. •

When was the maximum contribution set at \$1000? Inflation has greatly reduced the real value of \$1000. We ought to increase the maximum at least to account for inflation. We should also consider indexing it to the CPI so that it stays in step automatically with future increases in prices.

4. •

One thing I've observed is that the cost of campaigning prices out potential candidates and makes it very difficult to fund a campaign that can contact voters meaningfully. We should consider some form of public funding.

5. •

The BSE said candidates cannot make purchases for the campaign using personal funds and subsequently be reimbursed by the campaign. This makes no sense to me. One candidate did it at least once because it was the quickest way at the time to make the payment. As long as it is reported as an expense of the campaign, who cares that it was first paid by the candidate. This probably requires a Code change.

6. •

I vaguely recall that Treasurers are not permitted to make in-kind contributions to the campaign. If this is correct, it makes no sense to me. As long as it is reported as an in-kind contribution, what is the harm? This probably requires a Code change.

7. •

Do's and don'ts. This may not need to be addressed in the Code, but several of the campaigns committed similar violations in 2023. The campaign rules and reporting rules are complex. You can't just hand a copy of the Code to campaigns and expect them to understand and follow all of the rules. It would help to prepare a list of common violations and distribute them to the campaigns at the campaign kick-off and later during the fall. As an example, every yard sign must include a statement saying it was paid for by the campaign together with the name of the Treasurer. These things are easy to forget.

8. •

In 2023 the State (or County) Board of Elections provided the City with incorrect voter lists. I think the problem was detected by someone other than a City staff person. I think this happened twice in 2023 and may have happened in 2019. Each time the City blamed it on the State BOE. I'm paraphrasing, but they said that the City has no control over the data, so the City is not responsible. This is unacceptable. The City is conducting the election and should take greater responsibility for verifying voter registration lists. This is especially critical for mail ballots. After the 2023 election, I suggested a way to do this to the BSE. There is no reason that the City can't compare a new voter list to old voter lists to identify missing chunks of voters. It's just a matter of setting up a database of addresses within the City and cross-walking them electronically to the new voter list provided by the State, to see what's missing.

9. •

I would like to see us shift to district representatives instead of at-large representatives. It made little sense to increase the size of the Council while not shifting to district representation. Previously we had 4 council members each trying to represent 70,000 people. Now we have 6 council members facing the same task and same workload. We should task a group with coming up with a well thought out proposal, which would include proposed district definitions, that could be discussed with the broader community before the next election, and then put it to a question on the next ballot.

10. •

If we do not shift to district representation, we should task a group to examine the pros and cons of ranked choice voting. There was a proposal to include this as a question on the 2023 ballot. I sent emails urging the Council not to include the question because the proposal was not fleshed out. It was just a concept, and voters need something much more concrete than a concept before giving their approval. But I've heard a lot of good things about the concept, and I would like to see what it would actually mean in Rockville. I suspect most voters would feel the same.



Rise Together

**Barry Jackson**  
COUNCILMEMBER  
**City of Rockville**  
C: 202-641-4018  
P: 240-314-8295  
[www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)



Judy Penny

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**Subject:**

FW: Document shared with you: "Vote 16 Testimony.docx"

**Attachments:**

ATT00001.txt; ATT00002.htm

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**From:** Youth Commission (via Google Docs) <[drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com](mailto:drive-shares-dm-noreply@google.com)>

**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 5:17 PM

**To:** Sara Taylor-Ferrell <[sferrell@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:sferrell@rockvillemd.gov)>

**Subject:** Document shared with you: "Vote 16 Testimony.docx"

## Youth Commission shared a document



Youth Commission ([rockvillemdyc@gmail.com](mailto:rockvillemdyc@gmail.com)) has invited you to **view** the following document:



 Vote 16 Testimony.docx



Does this item look suspicious? [Block sender](#)

Google LLC, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043, USA

You have received this email because [rockvillemdyc@gmail.com](mailto:rockvillemdyc@gmail.com) shared a document with you from Google Docs.

Google™

We are the City of Rockville Mayor and Council's Youth Commission. Our role is to be leaders within the City to advocate for Rockville's youth. Working alongside each other, staff liaison, and Mayor and Council to set meaningful goals and develop plans to make our city a more welcoming and supportive place for teens has been an incredibly rewarding experience. We speak out today as a testament of the morals, values, standards, and genuine concern for our city's engagement in the youth. The Vote 16 movement is extremely important to us and we are in full support. Young people are trusted to contribute to society through many ways, something that turning eighteen does not change. We are responsible enough to do many things that are privy to our futures so we should have the right to vote for leaders who make decisions affecting our future. Lowering the voting age requirement to sixteen could increase civic engagement and encourage citizens to become informed and participate in the political process from a younger age, fostering a lifelong habit of voting.

First and foremost, at sixteen, teens in many places are trusted with serious responsibilities, ones that directly affect their lives, communities, and futures. So why are they not trusted with a voice in their democracy? At sixteen, teenagers can legally drive in Maryland—something that is not just a privilege, but a major responsibility that requires maturity, focus, and decision-making under pressure. A single wrong move on the road can be fatal. If we trust sixteen year-olds to safely operate a vehicle and follow laws that protect public safety, we should also trust them to make thoughtful choices at the ballot box. Thousands of sixteen and seventeen year-olds work and pay taxes, contributing to Social Security, Medicare, and income taxes just as adults do, yet with no say in how that money is spent. If you are old enough to pay taxes, you are old enough to have a voice in how those taxes are used. Teens at the age of sixteen can legally work in most industries and are expected to follow labor laws, sign

contracts, and make financial decisions. Many teens work to support themselves or help their families, and are held accountable for their actions in the workplace just like adults are. That level of responsibility should come with the civic right to vote on the policies that impact the economy, education, healthcare, and jobs. At sixteen and seventeen teens are still in high school, living every day under the rules and decisions made by school boards, state legislatures, and Congress. From curriculum standards to school safety and mental health funding, teens are directly impacted by education policy. Should we not have a say in the system we are required to be a part of? We as young people are already showing up, leading climate strikes, organizing for gun safety, demanding racial justice, and volunteering for political campaigns. We are engaged. We care. And we are ready. Giving sixteen year-olds the vote is not about forcing politics on youth—it is about empowering those who are already participating to make their voices count.

Additionally, granting 16 year-olds the ability to vote would instill in them lifelong values of civic engagement and duty. When they are given the right to do so as adults, they might feel too busy to partake in political actions that may not have as significant a sway on the world, such as local elections. However, giving them the suffrage in their late teenage years would teach them how important local elections are, creating a habit that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. It would also be an important educational step to voting in congressional and presidential elections, a leap that may seem daunting otherwise. With today's youth often feeling frustrated and underrepresented in government, it is imperative to make voting and civic participation important to them through the right to vote in local elections, to empower them and teach them to be active citizens for the rest of their lives. While it seems like a small step, it would promote their appreciation and contribution to our democratic system, bettering the nation for generations to come.

While sixteen year-olds are often seen as lacking the maturity needed to vote, there are many who are as knowledgeable and mature as the average adult, and who should not be denied the suffrage solely because some sixteen-year olds are not. Ultimately, the fact that one has to go out of their way to vote discourages those who do not truly care about the process from doing so.

This brings us to our final point: equal representation is essential. If you ask a group of 30+ year-old adults if a sixteen year-old should be able to vote, as seen in the 2023 election almost every time means that the answer is “No.” You must include the group it is affecting and asking for change, but so far, this issue has been debated behind closed doors, without asking the City’s youth where their opinions stand. If only one group of people in the same demographic is asked, change will never occur and we will forever face exclusion as well as finding ourselves in a loophole of the youth’s cries for inclusion not being put into action. It is unjust that the youth, those with stakes in this debate, have no voice in its final outcome. As members of the Youth Commission, we represent Rockville youth in its government and advise the Mayor and Council, but ironically, we cannot do something as simple as voting.

We are asking to be trusted with our basic democratic rights. In closing, we stand before you not as a single group, but as a voice for a generation pleading to be heard. Our experiences, our perspectives, and our futures are inseparably linked to the decisions made by the Mayor and Council. Excluding us from the table is not just a disservice to us but a disservice to change itself. Give us a seat, lend us your ear, and one step at a time we can build a future where every voice matters and every generation thrives. Thank you.



**Judy Penny**

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**From:** jbecker <jb.ic@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 3:18 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** community engagement sessions on election codes and procedures updates  
**Attachments:** 06-9-25 community engagement ltr on elections to city clerk\_000067.pdf

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

as received and instructed on the evening of thursday, 6/5 and saturday morning, 6/7, attached are my comments on the election updates as presented by the rockville board of supervisors of elections, the city staff, gant consultants and most important the citizens of rockville that participated in both sessions


any comments/questions/suggestions are appreciated

good luck

**Regards,  
John Becker  
Direct: 301-852-9051**

6/9/25

To: city clerk/director of council operations  
city of rockville, 111 maryland ave., rockville, md 20850  
cityclerk@rockvillemd.gov

Fr: john becker   
148 monroe street  
rockville, md 20850  
jb.ic@aol.com

Re: community engagement sessions on election codes and procedures updates

I want the rockville mayor and council to adopt the following updates to the election code and the procedures that affect the operation of the election process of the city of rockville as well as continue with policies and procedures in place:

1. continue vote by mail
2. increase transparency in campaign funding
3. city must enforce all aspects of campaigns: funding, specific response by campaigns/campaigners to the board of supervisors of elections (bse), city attorney and city staff to questions, citations of violations of the election code.
4. Penalties for violating election code/procedures must be clear and enforced. enforcement is not an option.
5. City of rockville must establish more diversity of representatives that live throughout the city and not in a limited area of the city, and not to single family detached/town home areas. There is definitely a lacking in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore, representative districts that address diversity, equity, and inclusion are necessary. The formulation of such districts must include strong, strenuous participation by the citizens ensuring fair, equitable, and inclusive elections.
6. Updates to the election code and procedures must be in language that is easy to understand and that all portions of the updates clearly state who/which department of the city a citizen can contact for assistance in understanding the updates and the overall code/procedures.
7. Regulations regarding outside campaign organizations (those that are not directly/legally under the control of a candidate) are required to be transparent.
8. Bse: more information on its functions, what is their responsibility, what is not and if not what department, other public citizen body is.

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Sarah Renner  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 2:46 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Sarah Renner and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Sarah Renner

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This message was sent by Sarah Renner via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Sarah Renner at [sarah\\_e\\_renner@yahoo.com](mailto:sarah_e_renner@yahoo.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Keren Cummins  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 1:18 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Keren Cummins and I am a resident of Rockville. I have given a lot of thought and research to the benefits of ranked choice voting and it captures the best of competing approaches.

I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Three key reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Keren Cummins

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This message was sent by Keren Cummins via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Keren Cummins at [keren\\_cummins@yahoo.com](mailto:keren_cummins@yahoo.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Rebecca Cole  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 1:08 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Rebecca Cole and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
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I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Rebecca Cole

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This message was sent by Rebecca Cole via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Rebecca Cole at [rjanecole@gmail.com](mailto:rjanecole@gmail.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Kellie Nance  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 12:27 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Kellie Nance and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Kellie Nance

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This message was sent by Kellie Nance via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Kellie Nance at [eclectickellie@gmail.com](mailto:eclectickellie@gmail.com).

## Sara Taylor-Ferrell

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Braum Katz  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 12:15 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Braum Katz and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Braum Katz

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This message was sent by Braum Katz via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Braum Katz at [braumjkatz@gmail.com](mailto:braumjkatz@gmail.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Jessica Silverman  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 11:58 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Jessica Silverman and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Jessica Silverman

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This message was sent by Jessica Silverman via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Jessica Silverman at [jokerjesss@gmail.com](mailto:jokerjesss@gmail.com).



## Judy Penny

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**From:** rtreinhard@aol.com  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 11:56 AM  
**To:** cityclerk; Judy Penny  
**Subject:** Re: elections input

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Judy...

Let me add:

I am in favor of ranked-choice voting. It is fairer. Rockville could provide a good test case that could later be picked up by Montgomery County. MoCo may very well have had a different county executive in each of the last two elections, instead of one elected with a distinct minority vote.

Rick

On Monday, June 2, 2025 at 11:50:21 AM EDT, Judy Penny <jpenny@rockvillemd.gov> wrote:

Mr. Reinhard,

Thank you for the email regarding your input on possible changes to Chapter 8.

Your comments will be shared with the election consultant as he shares recommendations with the Mayor and Council.

Kind regards, and stay safe!



Rise Together

**Judy Penny**  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**City Clerk/DCO**

O. 240-314-8280

D. 240-314-8281

[www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)



*"In order to be in compliance with the open meetings act, please do not reply to all. If you would like to discuss a matter in an open meeting, please let me know and we can have the matter placed as an agenda item for discussion"*

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**From:** rtreinhard@aol.com <rtreinhard@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 1, 2025 1:35 PM  
**To:** cityclerk <cityclerk@rockvillemd.gov>  
**Subject:** elections input

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Richard Reinhard

38 Maryland Ave Unit 501

Rockville MD 20850

- Do you prefer to vote by mail? Yes.
- Do you think there are enough drop boxes and voting centers? Yes.
- Do you think there is enough transparency around funding campaign committees/slates/political action committees? No.
- Are you satisfied with the city's efforts to enforce its campaign finance laws? No. Get on top of it.
- Do you believe the city is promoting diversity, equality and inclusion appropriately? Yes.

- Should the city implement the 2023 ballot measures? If so, which ones? Yes on term limits.
- \* Do you have other ideas to improve the city's election process? No excuses for making mistakes on who lives in the City of Rockville and who doesn't. No excuses for voters getting ballots late or not at all. Don't just point fingers at Montgomery County. Fix it. It's not rocket science. If the Board of Supervisors of Elections cannot get these simple things right, no one will have confidence in it.

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Travis Gettinger  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 11:56 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Hello,

I am Travis Gettinger and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Travis Gettinger

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This message was sent by Travis Gettinger via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Travis Gettinger at [travismgettinger@hotmail.com](mailto:travismgettinger@hotmail.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Andrea Shettle  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 11:54 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Andrea Shettle and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections as an important means of strengthening our democracy.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Andrea Shettle

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This message was sent by Andrea Shettle via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Andrea Shettle at [andrea.shettle@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.shettle@gmail.com).

**Judy Penny**

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Rebekah Durig  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 11:26 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Rebekah Durig and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why I care about RCV:

- 1) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 2) Voters Education: I care deeply about breaking bipartisan clashes without intent to compromise or find solutions. While Rockville does not have this issue due to non-partisan elections, implementing RCV in Rockville will allow voters to be more familiar with the process in partisan elections for the state and the nation.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I hope this message was also clear in the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Rebekah Durig

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This message was sent by Rebekah Durig via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Rebekah Durig at [rebekahdurig@yahoo.com](mailto:rebekahdurig@yahoo.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** mark votepierzchala.org <mark@votepierzchala.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 9, 2025 11:12 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Comments on election laws

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

June 9, 2025

Dear City Clerk's Office,

I attended Saturday's session.

During the session's question and answer part, I advocated that the City of Rockville pay for a mailing where every eligible candidate gets one page in the mailing subject to certain minimal rules.

The facilitator morphed this into something else in his comments. I did not appreciate that.

I know the difference between mail and electronic communications. They are not the same thing, and they do not usually replace one another. The facilitator should have just accepted the suggestion without commenting on it.

Here are my responses to the questions posed on the handout.

1. I vote in person, but I think it is very important that Vote by Mail is available.
2. I think there are enough drop boxes and voting centers, especially with the vote by mail option.
3. I think there is enough transparency around campaign committees that are also referred to as slates. In 2023, we saw a political action committee send 2 widely mailed postcards. While the PAC did file a report, and did list its contributors (mostly or totally corporate as I recall), the people behind the mailing were not known, or it was hard to find out about them. PACs are legal, but voters should be able to determine who is behind this independently spent money.
4. I am not satisfied with the City's efforts to enforce the campaign finance laws in that there was one candidate who did not file and the City Attorney's Office decided not to file a municipal action. These reports are considerably easier to file than before, but they still require a great effort, often at the most difficult times of the campaign.

I would agree to provide an easy way out for someone who effectively ends their campaign, but there must still be some reporting.

5. I believe the City is effectively promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. There is huge outreach.
6. If any of the ballot measures should be changes, it should be ones that were approved by the voters in the advisory referenda. There was only one that was approved (term limits) though I don't personally support it.
7. I have other suggestions to improve the City's election process:
  - a. The City should implement campaign financing along the lines that the County has approved them. Since all elected positions are at-large, it can be daunting for first-time candidates to overcome resource issues. This is especially true for those who are not well-connected with the political powers in the City.
  - b. Ranked-choice voting should be on the ballot for 2027 as an advisory referendum.
  - c. As noted above, there should be one City-Wide physical mailing where every certified candidate gets a page subject to some minimal rules. This would help candidates overcome resource issues.

Yours,

Mark Pierzchala



## Judy Penny

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**From:** Claire Funkhouser <clairefunk@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 8, 2025 7:11 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Sara Taylor-Ferrell City Clerk, Director of Council Operations

Re: Elections

We are sorry neither one of us were able to attend the in-person sessions last week. We did want to provide input about the questions posed.

- 1) We prefer to vote by mail in the city elections. We have found it to be easy and convenient
- 2) There seem to have been sufficient drop boxes and voting centers. However, since the last election, several new housing developments, primarily townhouses and large apartments, have been built. They are in areas throughout Rockville such as Twinbrook, Town Center, King Farm, Tower Oaks and Rockville Pike so it would be wise to examine this further.
- 3) There has been increased ability for the public to follow information regarding funding campaign committees/slates/political action committees on line.
- 4) Again, with the public and the Board of Elections able to monitor all of this, additional scrutiny would promote the expectation of enforcement of campaign finance laws
- 5) We are not quite sure why this question regarding diversity, equality and inclusion is being asked. Any registered voter who is a citizen of Rockville and who can gather 100 verified signatures can be on the ballot.
- 6) The only ballot measure which we feel strongly about is the one concerning representative districts. We believe all seats on the Mayor and Council should stay at-large. Decisions should be made for the benefit of the entire city rather than potentially competing districts.

Additionally, we want to stress the critical role of the support of several groups within the city's governance to run a successful and smooth election. Obviously, the City Clerk's Office and the Board of Supervisors of Elections must work well together. Also, the City Manager's Office can provide critical support in terms of publicity through the city's website, Rockville Reports, Channel 11 and the coordination of any debates. The city's IT Department may be helpful with the testing of any equipment the city may use with the County's registration process.

Most important is the relationship between the City Clerk's Office and the City Attorney's Office. An attorney should be assigned who has the time and knowledge to provide support to the Clerk's Office and the Board of Supervisors of Elections from the beginning of the election cycle to well after the election.

Rockville has a history of elections that have been well run and legal. Hopefully, this year's examination will only enhance this most important of civil activities.

Claire and Gary Funkhouser

1037 Carnation Drive

**Sara Taylor-Ferrell**

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**From:** Gaby Moore <gabynm1013@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 8, 2025 1:48 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Rockville City Lowered Voting Age

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

My name is Gabrielle Moore Brooks and I am a regional director of Vote16 Maryland, a statewide coalition working to lower the voting age to 16 in municipalities throughout Maryland. I still strongly support allowing 16 and 17 year olds to vote in Rockville local elections. As a young patron from another part of Maryland who had spent years engaged in civic education and student advocacy, I've witnessed first hand that 16 and 17 year olds are variable of understanding complex issues that affect them.

In communities across Maryland, including my own, youth are testifying before school boards and town halls, working on political campaigns, and advocating for legislation on the state level. These students are paying attention to policies on education, safety, mental health, and the environment because these decisions affect our daily lives. The idea that 16-year-olds are not mature or informed enough to vote simply isn't the reality.

Research has shown that lowered vote age also increases overall civic involvement. When given the chance, 16 and 17 year olds have higher voter turnout rates and created lifelong voters. It makes sense to allow them to have a say in who is making decisions about their future, especially at the local level where policies often have the most immediate impact.

Local democracy is strongest when it reflects the voices of all stakeholders. I urge you to lead by example and give 16 and 17 year olds the right to participate in shaping their community. Their voices are vital and more than ready to be heard at the ballot.

Gabrielle Moore Brooks

## Sara Taylor-Ferrell

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**From:** Kylen Jackson <kylenjackson318@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 8, 2025 12:14 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Cc:** vanessali1805@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Written testimony on voting age

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Good evening members of the Rockville City Council,

My name is Kylen Jackson. I'm a high school student, and someone who believes deeply in expanding civic opportunity. I am writing to support Rockville's efforts to lower the voting age to 16-17 in our local city elections.

At 16, many young people are already working jobs, paying taxes, helping care for family members, and engaging in community organizations. In my own experience, I've seen students lead public policy efforts, testify before elected officials, and help shape school and local government decisions. We're already involved — we just deserve the right to have our voices counted at the ballot box.

Rockville has the chance to set a powerful example. By recognizing youth not just as future voters, but as current stakeholders, you show trust in the next generation of leaders. This is a decision that would reflect Rockville's commitment to equity, participation, and long-term democratic strength.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this important step.

Kylen Jackson

Maryland Youth Association Baltimore County Local Policy Co-Director

Baltimore County Public School SMOB Committee Member

Maryland Association of Student Councils Finance Committee Member

Barnes & Scott Youth at Law  
Human Resources Coordinator

## Sara Taylor-Ferrell

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**From:** Gabriella Blair <gabrielladblair@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 9:19 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Cc:** Vanessa Li; anyafkleinman@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Written Commentary  
**Attachments:** Gabriella Blair - Vote16MD Rockville Commentary.pdf

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Hello, my written commentary is attached below.

My name is Gabriella Blair, and I am a Freshman. I currently serve as a Co-Regional Director for Vote 16MD. I write to you today in support of lowering the voting age in Rockville, Maryland, to 16. Doing so could make a real and lasting difference in our communities and in how we approach civic life.

Lowering the voting age to 16 can truly strengthen our democracy and reshape the way young people engage with the world around them. Sixteen-year-olds are already contributing to society in meaningful ways. Many hold jobs, drive, and some live independently. Giving them the right to vote ensures they have a say in the policies and decisions that shape their daily lives and futures.

By allowing young people to vote, we're not just recognizing their responsibilities, we're encouraging civic participation early on, helping them build lifelong voting habits and empowering a generation that will live with the long term consequences of today's decisions. Excluding them from the process isn't just unfair, it's a missed opportunity to make our democracy more inclusive, forward-thinking, and representative. Maryland already allows 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote so why not let them actually cast a ballot at the same age?

Lowering the voting age wouldn't just benefit youth, it would strengthen civic engagement across the board. Campaigns and politicians would be encouraged to consider the perspectives of younger voters, and in the process would gain insight into the issues that matter most to them. This kind of inclusion would help ensure that our political system is responsive to all voices in the community, not just the oldest or loudest.

We've already seen success in other parts of Maryland. For example, in Takoma Park, where the voting age was lowered to 16 in 2013, turnout among 16- and 17-year-olds was 44% which is nearly four times higher than the turnout rate of voters 18 and older, which was only 11%. This shows that when young people are included, they do show up and take the responsibility seriously. There's no reason to believe the same couldn't happen in Rockville.

In fact, the interest is already there. As of 2023, over 52,000 16- and 17-year-olds had pre-registered to vote in Maryland, according to The Civics Center. These are thousands of teens actively preparing to fulfill their civic duty. But while they are ready and willing, the law is holding them back along with lawmakers. Just imagine how many thoughtful, passionate and informed voices are going unheard. These voices are going unheard, not because they're not engaged but simply because of an outdated age restriction.

Based on this data and the success seen in other Maryland cities, Rockville has a real opportunity to lead. Lowering the voting age to 16 would show that the city values its youth, trusts them, and is ready to strengthen local democracy by including those who are most affected by the decisions being made.

Young people care deeply about the issues in their communities and when you give them a chance, they will show up. I strongly urge you to allow them that opportunity by lowering the voting age in Rockville to 16.

Sincerely,  
Gabriella Blair  
Vote16MD CoRegional Director

## Sara Taylor-Ferrell

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**From:** Vincent Russo <vdrusso1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 7:06 PM  
**To:** Sara Taylor-Ferrell  
**Cc:** Judy Penny  
**Subject:** Fwd: election reform comments  
**Attachments:** Election reform notes 2025.docx

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Hello Sara,

Here are my comments for Rockville elections.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Kind regards,

Vincent

## **General statement**

Keep it simple. The rewrite of Chapter 8 presents the opportunity to simplify the city's election practices. This will benefit voters and those who must administer the election. Be mindful that the city: (1) has no control over its voter register; (2) uses county equipment and space for secure storage of ballots, canvassing and tabulation; and (3) does not have a full-time elections department. Our ambitions must align with these realities.

## **Enforcement**

- Penalties are insufficient to compel timely compliance. Public interest for disclosure and transparency is not served when candidates evade the rules.
- Avoid putting BSE in position of having to enforce violations that will not be pursued by the city. Discretion is ok to a point, but we do not want the BSE to be perceived as unevenly enforcing between candidates or enforcing some rules and not others.

## **CFR**

- Is there commercial software (an app?) with data validations that would simplify compliance for campaigns and review for the BSE? Common problems are carrying forward balances, accounting for loans.
- Review timeliness of CFR filing and penalties for non-compliance. Voters should have visibility into funding sources earlier in the process because votes are cast well before election day with VBM. Candidates can avoid reporting under current rules without incurring penalties until after votes are cast. Or ever, really.

## **Campaign financing**

- Anticipate that increasing sums will come from external organizations wanting to participate in city elections. Adjust Chapter 8 accordingly. Should these organizations be subject to the same requirements as candidate committees?
- Outcomes of municipal elections are hugely consequential, especially regarding land use, and thus will attract money. Rather than strain to keep money out, we should embrace the interest in promoting participation in city elections. That seems healthy.



- Maintain alignment of Chapter 8 with SCOTUS decisions which trend toward fewer restrictions. E.g., *Buckley v Valeo*; *McCutchen*; *Citizens United*. Avoid introducing measures that would put Rockville in a position to have to defend (with costly litigation) an election code that runs afoul of these decisions. It seems obvious but there is passion for (unconstitutional) restrictions on self-funding following the 2023 election.

### **Operations**

- Why do Rockville results take so long to tabulate? On election night Kentucky and Mississippi know their next governors hours before we know the outcome of our municipal election with fewer than 13,000 ballots cast.
- Do the data on drop box usage justify their continued use, much less expansion? Four underutilized locations together accounted for fewer than 8 percent of total ballots cast (Montrose, Lincoln Park, Thomas Farm, and Twinbrook). The other locations at city hall (38.7 percent of ballots) and the senior center (3.5 percent) saw more usage. The security and collection costs should be considered.
- Consider compensation/stipend of BSE members.

**Legal counsel.** BSE should have independent or in-house legal counsel during election season, especially for canvassing and election nights.

### **Code changes**

- Do not mandate placement of drop boxes and other operational details in the code. BSE needs flexibility. Code should give overall direction, not mandate operational specifics. Technical and security considerations are factors, as well as cost.
- Update language that refers to dated communication methods; archaic references. “Newspaper”.
- Clarify roles between CM, CA, and DCO. Sign enforcement. Running forums. Infraction enforcement. What does it mean that violators “shall be prosecuted” by the CA? What discretion does the CA have to opt not to prosecute?
- Generally, the dollar amounts referenced in the code need to be updated for inflation. For example, some limits are as low as \$25 in various parts of the code.
- Clarify definition of “campaign committee.” Is it just a slate? Or sometimes something else?

## **Ballot questions and other proposed reforms**

### **Public financing**

- Rockville is small compared to county. What is cost? How would the program be administered and by whom? CM? BSE? City Clerk? What is threshold for qualifying?
- Enlarging Council in 2023 enabled election of wider range of candidates, thus achieving what would be a goal of public financing.

### **Ranked Choice Voting**

- Election outcomes for our current process and RCV are likely to be mathematically equivalent in Rockville. Voters currently select up to six choices. When selections of all voters are aggregated, the result is a collective ranking not unlike the outcome from RCV. So why bother with the complication and expense of RCV? Our mayoral elections are historically binary affairs, so the winners already have majority support.
- Expensive to implement if not supported by the state and county with appropriate equipment and software.
- RCV is a solution in search of a problem that we do not have in Rockville municipal elections.

**Alphabetic ordering.** How would random ordering of candidate names affect the number of ballot styles needed? We already have ten ballot styles. As a voter I know the candidates I want to support and prefer seeing them ordered alphabetically for ease of identification. Again, keep it simple. Avoid confusing voters.

### **Districts**

- Council expansion from five to seven seats opened an opportunity for more areas of the city to be represented. Indeed, our sample size of 1 already shows positive results with candidates from King Farm and Twinbrook winning seats in 2023. Allow more time to evaluate whether the expansion continues to result in improved geographic representation before adopting districts.
- Would require additional costs for consultants to draw and eventually reapportion the districts. Need code to regulate periodic reapportionment.
- If the city did adopt districts, we should maintain citywide voting so all members are responsive to the entire population. Similar to Board of Education elections in the county.

- Rockville is a compact, relatively homogenous city with similar needs and wants throughout, so district voting seems an unnecessary complication. We do not have significant socio-economic, demographic, or geographic disparities like larger polities where district voting is perhaps justified.

**Term limits.** Term limits are unnecessary in Rockville. Since 1900 only a handful of officials have served longer than 12 years in combined service as either councilmember or mayor. The longest tenures were 14 years (Bob Dorsey 1993-2007; Bridget Newton 2009-2023; Douglas Blandford 1932-1946); 16 years (G. LaMar Kelley 1934-1952); and 18 years (Joseph Clagett 1914-1932). It is not a job people hold for decades like members of Congress, nor is it an executive position prone to abuse by long-term incumbents. If experienced council members are willing to serve and the voters are happy to have them, so be it.

**Presidential-year voting.** Retain off-year election cycles for municipal elections. This gives the city more control over the ballot and voting methods. Our vote-by-mail innovation, the first in the state of Maryland, would not have been possible if we had coincided with the presidential election. Off-cycle elections preserve our ability to innovate and experiment.

Follow resident sentiment on **lowering voting age** and **non-citizen voting** both of which voters resoundingly rejected in 2023. Do not pursue these. There must be an age limit and 18 is appropriate. That 16-year-olds can drive is irrelevant. The city offers youth other means for civic engagement, including boards and commissions. Non-citizen voting would require the city to maintain a separate register of alien residents eligible to vote. What if a federal administration hostile to the interests of aliens demanded that list? Let's table this one.

## Judy Penny

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**From:** Asad Farooq <asadf20261@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 5:29 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for Lowering Voting Age in Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

My written election input is pasted below:

Dear Mayor Ashton and Council-members,

My name is Asad Farooq. I'm a junior in high school and I serve as a Regional Director for Vote 16MD, a statewide youth coalition committed to expanding voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds in local elections across Maryland.

I'm here today because Rockville has a powerful opportunity. An opportunity to strengthen its democracy, to include more voices in decisions that matter, and to lead by recognizing that young people are already engaged members of our community.

At 16, we're not watching from the sidelines. We're commuting on city buses, working jobs in Rockville businesses, navigating mental health challenges in our schools, and balancing demanding course loads with family responsibilities. These are not small things. These are adult-level decisions being made by people who are told they're still too young to vote. But how does that make sense? Why should we wait two more years to have a say in the very systems we're already living within?

Local government shapes so many of our everyday experiences. It affects how safe we feel in our neighborhoods, whether our schools are well-funded, how accessible our public transportation is, and whether our parks and libraries are being prioritized. These decisions are being made with or without our input. And when you're 16 or 17, waiting two more years can feel like an eternity, especially when those years are some of the most formative in a person's civic identity. If we want engaged, informed, lifelong voters, we shouldn't delay their entry into democracy. We should welcome it.

And this isn't just a theory. We've seen how it plays out right here in Montgomery County. In 2013, Takoma Park became the first city in the country to lower its voting age to 16. Like Rockville, it's a diverse and civically engaged city. And the results were remarkable. According to the University of Maryland's Civic Innovation Center, 44 percent of eligible 16- and 17-year-olds voted in that first election, compared to just 10 percent of the general population.

That enthusiasm didn't fade. In 2015, youth turnout was 45 percent. In 2017, it was nearly 48 percent. And in 2020, it rose to 69 percent, far exceeding the 54 percent turnout for other voters. These aren't one-time spikes. They show a pattern. When young people are invited into democracy, they show up and lead.

Some may still have doubts. Are 16-year-olds informed enough? Are they mature enough? The research says yes. The National Institutes of Health and the Vote16 Research Network have found that 16-year-olds have the cognitive ability to make thoughtful voting decisions. In fact, they are just as capable, if not more so, than older first-time voters. And when surveyed, many adults who initially opposed lowering the voting age changed their minds after hearing directly from young people.

So I ask again. What are we waiting for? Lowering the voting age doesn't just give young people a voice. It helps build lifelong voting habits. It brings more perspectives into our local decision-making. And it shows that Rockville believes in the next generation of leaders.

Let's follow the lead of our neighbors in Montgomery County and across the country. Let's give the young people of Rockville the chance to participate, to engage, and to help shape the city they already call home.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Asad Farooq

## Sara Taylor-Ferrell

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**From:** Anya Kleinman <anyafkleinman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 5:20 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Written Election Input

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

My written election input is pasted below. Thank you so much!

Dear Mayor Ashton and Councilmembers,

My name is Anya Kleinman. I am a rising senior at Richard Montgomery High School and the Statewide Co-Director of Vote16MD, a statewide coalition working to lower the voting age to 16 in Maryland's municipal elections. I am here to strongly endorse a measure enabling 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in the City of Rockville's local elections.

Turning 16 is a rite of passage. When you turn 16, you can operate a vehicle, get married, and drop out of high school, among other things. Turning 16 requires you to grapple with deeply consequential decisions and responsibilities. 16- and 17-year-olds are huge stakeholders in their communities, impacted by city council decisions ranging from mental health to local appropriations.

Now you may be thinking: Why 16? Well, according to a study conducted by the NIH, at 16, individuals are cognitively capable of making thoughtful and comprehensive voting decisions. On another note, data suggests that Rockville local elections, even with the measure of mail-in voting, experience low voter turnout during presidential election off-years. In Rockville's 2023 local election, the turnout rate hovered around 25%. I think we can all agree: when a minority of registered voters cast a ballot, city election results are not truly representative.

However, evidence shows that 16- and 17-year-olds are very reliable voters, with a voting rate up to 200% higher than the general population. Additionally, lowering the local voting age, as seen in Maryland municipalities like Takoma Park, leads to an increase in the general voting rate. A measure to lower the voting age provides Rockville with a unique opportunity to create more representative and democratic elections.

It's not just a matter of turnout; Voting is habit-forming. Allowing individuals to begin voting earlier in life has the potential to improve lifelong civic participation, creating a generation of engaged and active voters. A measure to lower the voting age doesn't just allow Rockville to enfranchise 16- and 17-year-olds; It allows Rockville to prepare young people to contribute meaningfully to democracy for the rest of their lives.

With this in mind, I urge you to support a measure to lower the voting age and take this essential step towards encouraging and extending youth civic participation in Rockville. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,  
Anya Kleinman  
Vote16MD Co-Director

**Sara Taylor-Ferrell**

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**From:** Gavin Falcon <gavinmichaelfalcon@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 5:19 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Public Commentary on Future of Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Hello,

I hope all is well, I just wanted to send my commentary, as I can't come in person. Thank you so much for the opportunity!

Here it is below:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AvnLAopuJQ9hG96IKbLR4y3Gff0W0wPQOdABRqlxrU/edit?usp=drivesdk>

I hope you have a great weekend.

Sincerely,  
Gavin Falcón



Good evening distinguished council members, my name is Gavin Falcon and I am a student leader in my community, writing today to provide commentary on Sections 8-6 of Rockvilles election code to allow for 16 years to vote and have their future as well.

Currently, this section of code is generally vague and left up to interpretation, falling back on the state legislature. But beyond that we now have the power to create meaningful change to empower all of us future leaders, not just now but forever. Many times decisions are being made at the state and national level without the student perspective in mind, making it feel as if our voices are meaningless. We need this alteration to prevent this feeling of helplessness, that ruins our society as a participatory democracy.

I can't speak for all students but I know speak for myself at least, and it is disheartening to see officials we don't elect control our lives. Even though I am now a student advocate, fighting for a better future for as many people as possible this wasn't always the case. Just because I couldn't vote I felt my voice meant nothing. We learn in school that we elect officials to make the choices for us, represent us, and protect us but we don't have any say in who they are ruining our sense of activism, how can that be?

Additionally, by the age of 16 the vast majority of individuals are neurological and socially intelligent enough to make decisions about their life, and are currently learning about government in our society, making many more informed than grown adults. So I have to ask again why we don't take advantage of this. The younger one starts in civic engagement the longer one will stay involved. With that being said, if we want voter turnouts representing all of Rockville, and everybody, we must make this change to empower us youth and set the foundation for our future.

In our great state Maryland we are able to register to vote at 16 but nothing more, so let's flip the page one area at the time starting with one of the best Rockville. Make a change that will last generations. Especially in this time of day we need all the voices we can get, and if we want that we must find ways to empower more individuals, and this is the key to doing so.

Considering all of this is section 6-8 please, specifically allow 16 years olds to vote, have a say in their life, and lay the groundwork for a better future for all of us Americans, Marylanders, and more. Thank you for your time.

**Judy Penny**

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**From:** Mary Cramer Wagner <mary@pinnaclestrategiesconsulting.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 3:06 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Cc:** Nina Taylor; Allison Sardinas  
**Subject:** Rockville City Council Meeting - Elections Review  
**Attachments:** HPSCAN\_20250606185350506\_2025-06-06\_185537610.pdf

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Good afternoon:

On behalf of the Center for Election Science, please see the attached written testimony with informational handouts.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Best Regards,

Mary Cramer Wagner  
Government Relations  
Pinnacle Strategies, LLC  
443-994-5073

THE CENTER FOR  
**Election Science**



6/6/2025

Rockville Mayor and City Council Members  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Mayor Ashton  
Council Member Fulton  
Council Member Jackson  
Council Member Myles  
Council Member Shaw  
Council Member Valeri  
Council Member Van Grack

**Subject: Consideration of Approval Voting as a Method of Voting**

I'm writing to respectfully request that the City of Rockville consider adopting **approval voting** as a more representative and fairer approach to electing local leaders.

Approval voting is a simple, nonpartisan reform that allows voters to select as many candidates as they support, not just one. This change empowers residents to vote honestly without fear of wasting their vote or splitting the vote among similar candidates.

Across the country, cities that have adopted approval voting such as Fargo, ND, and St. Louis, MO have seen:

- Higher voter satisfaction, as people feel their true preferences are better reflected.
- Reduced negative campaigning, since candidates are incentivized to appeal to a broader audience.
- Elimination of the "spoiler effect" and less need for strategic voting.
- Winners with broader community support, leading to stronger legitimacy and trust in elected leaders.

Rockville is known for being forward-thinking and community-centered. This reform would continue that tradition by ensuring our elections produce leaders who represent the full range of voter support not just those with narrow pluralities.

I encourage the Council to begin exploring approval voting through feasibility studies or public forums. The Center for Election Science would be glad to provide resources, connect you with experts, or participate in discussions on how approval voting is an elegant simple solution that can benefit Rockville.

Attached is a brief overview of approval voting and how it could be implemented locally.

Thank you for your time and commitment to improving our democratic process. I look forward to the opportunity to support this effort.

Warm regards,

*Nina Taylor*

Chief Executive Officer

The Center for Election Science

# Approval Voting Fact Sheet



## Approval Voting is Used in Government Elections Today

Fargo, ND became the first U.S. city to adopt approval voting in 2018, followed by St. Louis, MO in 2020. Both cities have conducted multiple elections using the new method without issues. Additionally, approval voting is currently used by the United Nations Security Council, the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and the American Mathematical Society.



## Approval Voting Has Been Used for Over 750 Years

Approval voting is one of the oldest voting methods in the world. The Republic of Venice used it for major elections from 1268 until 1797. Also used in papal enclaves, over 40 popes were elected through this method (then called 'scrutiny') from the 13th to 17th centuries.



## Why Approval Voting is Hitting the Radar Now

Larger candidate fields at every level are leading to more vote splitting. This phenomenon harms candidates who share similarities (e.g., two centrists, two women), causing both to lose as they 'take' votes from each other. This issue is prevalent in primaries, where multiple centrists lose to hyperpartisans. There's widespread discontent with hyperpartisan-dominated governments, prompting a search for solutions.



## Approval Voting is Different Than Ranked Choice Voting

Approval voting is not ranked choice voting. While both are alternative voting methods, they belong to different families of voting. We advocate for approval voting because it is simpler and cheaper than RCV while still being incredibly impactful. We believe people can support multiple methods at the same time. People can support approval voting, ranked choice voting, or both.



## Approval Voting Works With All Current Systems

Approval voting is so simple that it can work with any current voting system without adding time, complexity, or cost. Whether it's mail-in ballots, paper ballots, single or multiple winners, primaries or general elections, even proportional systems - there is no system too simple nor too complex for approval voting to improve.



## The Winner is Only the Most Supported Candidate

Everyone's chief concern is...who is going to win? In approval voting, candidates win by attracting broad support from all the voters, rather than focusing solely on a narrow, dedicated base. They may lose if they fail to appeal to a wide range of voters or go against mainstream opinion. Simply put, those who perform well in approval voting bring people in.



## The Center for Election Science is a National, Nonpartisan Reform Organization

CES is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan nonprofit organization that advocates for approval voting in state legislatures, educates the public, and advances the study of key and under-researched topics like vote splitting.

# What is Approval Voting?



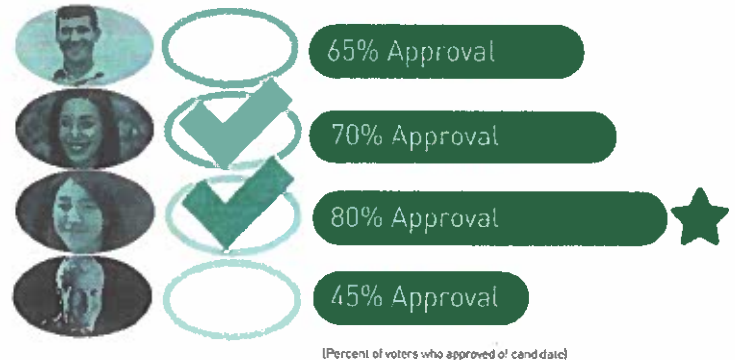
**Right now we can only  
choose one candidate.**

Candidates Choice Results



**In approval voting, you can  
support all the candidates you like.**

Candidates Choice Results



## Your Vote is Your Voice. Approval Voting Makes It Powerful.

### **Approval Voting is Simple**

In approval voting, voters can give support to all the candidates they like. All of the ballots are tallied, and the candidate who received an approval from the most voters wins. That's it. No multiple rounds or runoffs needed.

### **Approval Voting Makes Every Voter Important**

When voters have more options, they can't be ignored like they are now. By giving voters the power to give or deny support to any candidate, every voter can demand more from their politicians.

### **Approval Voting Allows You to Vote Your Conscience**

In approval voting, voters have the opportunity to express support for all the candidates they like, and vote against all the ones they do not. Unlike choose one voting, supporting a candidate only helps them. Voters can express their true beliefs, without fear of a helping a spoiler.

### **Approval Voting Winners Are Representative**

Unlike our current system, a candidate in an approval voting election can only win by being the most representative and broadly supported candidate of the electorate.

### **Approval Voting Stops the Vote Splitting That Elects Hyperpartisans**

'Vote splitting' is a phenomenon of choose one voting, where two similar candidates inadvertently divide their shared base and both lose to a third, less representative candidate. Hyperpartisans exploit this to get elected with a small, fervent base. Approval voting eliminates vote splitting, and this tactic of division.

### **Approval Voting Can Be Implemented Tomorrow at No Cost**

Our current machines can run approval voting elections today. That means we can have better, more representative elections tomorrow at little to no cost.

Try Approval Voting





# Case Study: St. Louis Before & After Approval Voting








## St. Louis, MO and The Delmar Divide

Through the heart of St. Louis, MO runs a road called Delmar Boulevard that politically and economically splits the city in two. Locals call it the Delmar Divide. The north side is predominantly black, the south side predominantly white. Decades of politics had favored the white south side, leaving the black north side to struggle. In a city where the population for both white and black voters were equal, all city politics revolved around this question, "which side would win, and which side would be shut out?"

St. Louis had an issue that made things worse. Races for offices like mayor and alderman were drawing upwards of seven candidates, leaving candidates to split votes between them and denying a majority winner. From 2015-2019, there were eight city elections in St. Louis where the winner earned less than 37% of the vote. Of those eight elections, five had winners who earned less than 20% of the vote. For decades there was suspicion that this was done purposefully by white politicians who would find extra black candidates to run to split the black vote to help white politicians win.

Purposeful or not, the vote splitting issue in St. Louis was out of control, and more often the communities of color were penalized for having multiple candidates from their community run in the same election. This was especially true in the 2017 race for mayor, where five major candidates ran for the seat.

### March 2017 STL Mayor Results

Candidate	Percent of Vote
 Lyda Krewson <small>Suburban</small> 32%	
 Tishaura Jones <small>City Treasurer, Former St. Louis Mayor</small> 30%	
 Lewis Reed <small>President, Board for St. Louis</small> 18%	
 Antonio French <small>Alderman</small> 16%	
 Jeffrey Boyd <small>Candidate</small> 3%	

**South St. Louis had one major candidate, Krewson, while north St. Louis had four. Despite 68% of voters choosing black candidates, Krewson won.**

**St. Louis voters rightfully asked - "How is this right?"**

A coalition emerged to reform St. Louis elections. They started a ballot initiative campaign, called Prop D (for Democracy), and an organization to advocate for it, St. Louis Approves. They wanted to end vote splitting by bringing **approval voting** to all city elections. In 2019 The Center for Election Science joined the effort. St. Louis Approves was able to build a large coalition from across the city that went to community events, town halls and door-to-door to grow support for this effort. In November 2020 St. Louisans overwhelmingly voted in favor of the measure, **passing it with 68% support.**



## PROP D FOR DEMOCRACY

NOVEMBER 3, 2020

**ST. LOUIS IS AT A CROSSROADS AND NEEDS POSITIVE CHANGE.**

**THESE ORGANIZATIONS & LEADERS ENDORSE VOTING "YES" ON PROPOSITION D FOR DEMOCRACY.**

**ON NOVEMBER 3, VOTE WITH A DIVERSE COALITION OF LEADERS WHO BELIEVE THAT VOTERS SHOULD HOLD ALL OF THE POWER.**

**VOTE YES ON PROP D.**



St. Louis Young Democrats



League of Women Voters of Metro STL



The St. Louis Post Dispatch



St. Louis American Newspaper



Cori Bush, Democrat for Congress



Treasurer Tishaura Jones (D-St. Louis)



Rep. Rashleen Aldridge (D St. Louis)



Rep. Steve Butz (D St. Louis)



Recorder Michael Butler (D-St. Louis)



Alderman Megan Green (D-St)



Service Employees International Union



Action St. Louis Power Project

# Case Study: St. Louis Before & After Approval Voting







## Smashing the Divide

March of 2021 would be the first election in St. Louis history to use approval voting. Four major candidates ran, excluding Mayor Krewson who chose not to run for re-election. They included Tishaura Jones and Lewis Reed from 2017, as well as Alderwoman Cara Spencer and businessman Andrew Jones. Approval voting radically changed the election. Candidates pushed for broader support on both sides of the Delmar Divide

Voters could support multiple candidates who were similar, whether it be along ideological, racial or geographical lines. There was a clear consensus winner Tishaura Jones, hindered by vote splitting in the past, was the far-and-away winner of the first approval voting election with **57% approval**.

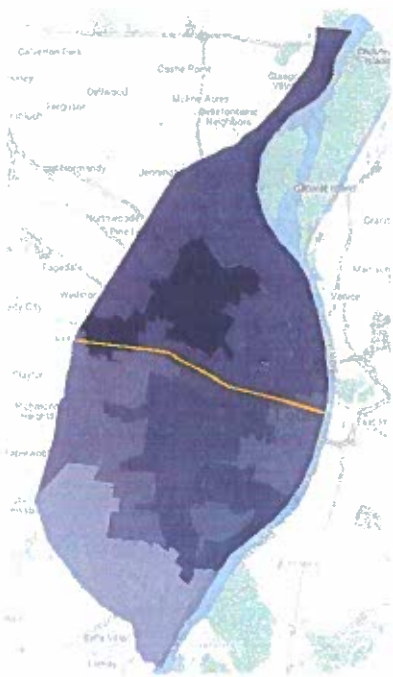
The real power of approval voting came into focus when plotting Jones' support on a map. The darker the blue, the higher approval support for her. Outlined in yellow is Delmar Boulevard.

## March 2021 STL Mayor Results with Approval Voting

Candidate	Percent Approval
 Tishaura Jones 57% <small>City Treasurer, Former State Rep.</small>	
 Cara Spencer 46% <small>Alderwoman</small>	
 Lewis Reed 39% <small>President, Board of Aldermen</small>	
 Andrew Jones 14% <small>Businessman</small>	

**While other candidates still drew most of their support from one side of the divide, Jones' support transcended the old borders.**

**Because of approval voting Jones had smashed through the Delmar Divide by appealing to the whole city, and she would go on to make history as the first black female mayor of St. Louis.**



## Aftermath

A poll conducted by Change Research in March of 2021 captured the broad feelings of support for approval voting.

- 81% of voters appreciated approval voting's simplicity.
- 67% of voters appreciated being able to express their preferences easily, without worrying about electability.
- 60% of voters want to use approval voting to elect other officials.

Voters supported 1.6 candidates on average. The City of St. Louis officials stated that no additional funding was used to make the change - The solution was simple, just allow for voters to fill in more bubbles on their ballots. In 2022, the St. Louis Board of Aldermen threatened to repeal Prop D, as some felt it threatened their power. The coalition regrouped, even larger this time, to enshrine approval voting into their charter forever. Bucking the desires of the Aldermen, St. Louis voters chose to keep Prop D's reforms in a measure called Prop R (for "Reform") - voting 69% in favor. St. Louis continues to use approval voting in city elections to this day.

## Approval Voting

### *Intuitive for Voters*

An approval voting ballot looks exactly like ballots that American voters are used to. The only difference is that, instead of having to choose just one candidate, voters can choose as many as they like.

### *Simple to Administer*

Approval voting can be implemented using existing machines and technologies. No additional investments are required.

### *Transparent, Clear & Quick Results*

Approval voting calculations are no mystery:

The candidate with the most votes wins. The difference from our current system is that people vote for who they *actually* support, so the results are not confused by issues such as vote splitting and discussions about 'electability.'

### *Clear about the full extent*

of support for each candidate

After an approval election, every candidate sees an honest tally of how many people support them. For the winner, that clarity means understanding real *support*, which can be leveraged to begin governing immediately and effectively on behalf of the whole community.

**Use the QR Code to Try Approval Voting**

**And learn more at [ElectionScience.org](https://ElectionScience.org)**



## Ranked-choice voting

### *Complicated for Voters*

To prepare for an RCV election, voters must read detailed instructions for the new ballot layout.

Voters must be careful to avoid mistakes, such as filling out more than one ranking per candidate.

### *Expensive & complex to administer*

In most cases, RCV requires cities and states to purchase new machines and technology. Election administrators must learn new ways to process ballots, conduct run-offs, and audit results.

### *Ambiguous about how the winner was determined*

Voters—and even most election administrators— cannot predict or follow how results are calculated. The 'run-off' process is entirely simulated, lengthy due to multiple rounds and reallocations of votes. Voters must trust that no mistakes were made—without being able to see or understand the steps involved.

### *Unclear about the full extent*

of support for each candidate Voters' voices are ignored. Many rankings aren't considered at all. Winners have no way to see who really supports them. With an uncertain mandate, they build coalitions before they can govern.

**Rank Choice Explained courtesy of  
NBC Bay Area (San Francisco, CA)**





**Sara Taylor-Ferrell**

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**From:** Nabila A Balami <nabilabalami2@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, June 6, 2025 10:24 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Community Input on the Future of Rockville Elections  
**Attachments:** Testimony for V16 (3).pdf

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Attached below is my Testimony for the upcoming public session and the future of Rockville Elections!

Good evening Rockville County Council Members,

My name is Nabila Balami. I'm a high school sophomore and a Director of Vote16 Maryland, a nonpartisan youth-led initiative working to lower the voting age to 16 in municipal elections across the state.

I appreciate making it possible to comment on the future of Rockville elections from the public. In consideration of making changes to Chapter 8 of the Rockville City Code, and those in particular that could increase local democracy by making it more inclusive, I urge you to include wording that would provide a vote for 16- and 17-year-olds in Rockville city elections.

Why? Because we're already members of this community. We go to school here. We work here. We drive your buses, walk your streets, and bear the aftermath of the decisions made by city leaders. But we don't have a voice in who speaks for us. That disparity is important. And lowering the voting age is a fact-based way of closing it.

We know it has worked in the past. Takoma Park and Hyattsville, Maryland, have extended voting to 16- and 17-year-olds in local elections, and those cities have seen young voters cast ballots in those elections at high rates. When kids are offered a choice, they take it seriously. I've seen this myself through my work on Vote16 Maryland and through interviews I've held on Vote16 Frederick Voices, a podcast I've started to provide a platform for young people's voices. Guests of mine have included the President of the Frederick County Council and the President of the Board of Education both of who have supported lowering voting age. If leaders at this level are able to recognize the value in young people engaging, that's a message.

Rockville can now have the opportunity to be next, to lead by example of what civic inclusion means and set an example as a region with a forward-thinking change to your election law. Updating Chapter 8 to enfranchise 16- and 17-year-olds would not only support a generation, it would serve as a powerful statement that Rockville is committed to and values all citizens, regardless of age.

Thanks for considering this move toward a more representative and inclusive democracy.

Sincerely,

Nabila Balami  
Regional Director, Vote16 Maryland

**Sara Taylor-Ferrell**

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**From:** Zoë Burnett <zoeburnett008@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:32 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Written Testimony  
**Attachments:** Written%20Testimony.pdf.pdf

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Members of the Rockville City Council,

My name is Zoe Burnett and I am writing to express my strong support for lowering the voting age to 16 for local elections in Rockville, particularly those that directly affect youth, such as the Board of Education elections. Students spend the majority of their day in schools shaped by policies enacted by elected officials—most notably, members of the Board of Education. Yet, they have no say in who represents them. Lowering the voting age to 16 would ensure that students have a voice in decisions about curriculum, school safety, mental health resources, transportation, and funding. These are not abstract policy areas—they are realities students live every day. At 16, many students are already working, driving, and taking on adult responsibilities. Civics education is typically taught in high school—precisely when students are becoming most aware of their role in democracy. Allowing them to vote while they are still in school helps form strong lifelong voting habits, creating more engaged and informed citizens. Cities such as Takoma Park and Hyattsville, Maryland, have already allowed 16-year-olds to vote in local elections. The result? Higher voter turnout among young voters and a more representative electorate. Rockville has the opportunity to follow this successful model and become a leader in youth civic engagement in Montgomery County. Students are directly impacted by decisions made by local elected officials, yet they are consistently excluded from the process. Lowering the voting age would not only increase civic participation but also signal to our youth that their experiences and perspectives are valued. Empowering 16- and 17-year-olds with the right to vote in local elections will strengthen our democracy, improve civic education, and create a more inclusive community. I urge the Rockville City Council to move forward with this initiative and give our students a seat at the table. The future of Rockville belongs to them—they should have a say in shaping it..

Thanks,  
Zoe Burnett

## Judy Penny

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**From:** Sienna <sienna.alazarr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:30 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Cc:** vanessali1805@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Written Testimony in Support of Lowering the Voting Age

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Mayor and Council, Board of Supervisors of Elections, and City Clerk,

My name is Sienna Alazar. I am a high school sophomore and a Regional Director for Vote16MD. I am writing to express my strong support for lowering the voting age in Rockville municipal elections. Young people are deeply impacted by the decisions made at the local level, whether it's transportation, education, climate policy, or public safety. Giving 16 and 17-year-olds the right to vote not only reflects their place in the community but also helps develop lifelong civic engagement. Studies show that people who vote early in life are more likely to remain voters as adults.

At 16, many young people are already working, paying taxes, and contributing to their communities in meaningful ways. They are engaged, informed, and passionate about creating positive change.

Extending their voting rights is a step toward a more inclusive, representative, and forward-thinking democracy.

Lowering the voting age would also align with Rockville's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It ensures that youth voices, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, are not left out of decisions that shape their futures.

I strongly urge you to implement the 2023 ballot measures that expand voting access, including those that would lower the voting age. Thank you for considering this testimony and for your commitment to improving our city's democratic process.

Sincerely,

Sienna Alazar

[sienna.alazarr@gmail.com](mailto:sienna.alazarr@gmail.com)

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Brandon Barnard  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 5, 2025 8:24 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Brandon Barnard and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Brandon Barnard

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This message was sent by Brandon Barnard via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Brandon Barnard at [claboyz@yahoo.com](mailto:claboyz@yahoo.com).

## Judy Penny

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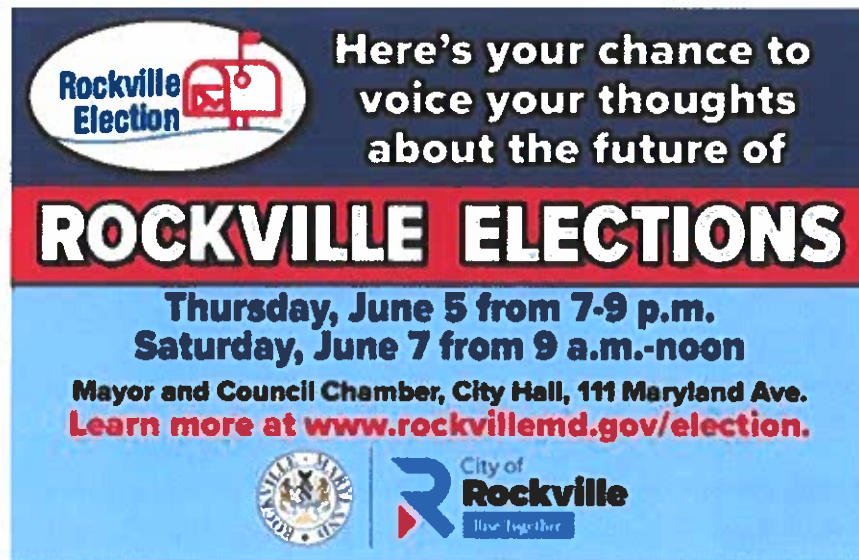
**From:** ALAN KAPLAN <doctorask@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 5, 2025 7:27 AM  
**To:** Judy Penny  
**Subject:** Re: FINAL REMINDER - Thursday - June 4 - Voice Your Thoughts on the Future of Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Just be sure we - that we keep the mail-in ballots and early voting. Not sure about other issues.

Alan S. Kaplan M.D.  
Rockville

On 06/04/2025 9:43 AM EDT Judy Penny <jpenny@rockvillemd.gov> wrote:



Community engagements sessions in June offer the chance to voice your thoughts about the future of Rockville elections.

The Mayor and Council, Board of Supervisors of Elections, city staff, and a city consultant will conduct a top-to-bottom review of Rockville's future election process beginning with in-person sessions to gather input about potential changes to the city election code.

**The sessions will be held 7-9 p.m. Thursday, June 5 and 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, June 7 in the Mayor and Council chamber at City Hall, 111 Maryland Ave.**

The city is seeking input regarding [Chapter 8 of the city code, entitled "Elections."](#) Community members are asked to consider the following questions about city elections:

- Do you prefer to vote by mail?
- Do you think there are enough drop boxes and voting centers?
- Do you think there is enough transparency around funding campaign committees/slates/political action committees?
- Are you satisfied with the city's efforts to enforce its campaign finance laws?
- Do you believe the city is promoting diversity, equality and inclusion appropriately?
- Should the city implement [the 2023 ballot measures](#)? If so, which ones?
- Do you have other ideas to improve the city's election process?

Community members may also submit input in writing to the city clerk/director of council operations by 5 p.m. Monday, June 9 at [cityclerk@rockvillemd.gov](mailto:cityclerk@rockvillemd.gov).

For more information, visit [www.rockvillemd.gov/election](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/election).

**Sara Taylor-Ferrell**  
City Clerk/Director of Council operations  
**City Clerk/DCO**



**Rise Together**

P. 240-314-8280  
D. 240-314-8283  
[www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)



*"In order to be in compliance with the open meetings act, please do not reply to all. If you would like to discuss a matter in an open meeting, please let me know and we can have the matter placed as an agenda item for discussion"*



## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Isabel Dawson  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 3:32 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Isabel Dawson and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
- 3) Rockville is Ready - RCV is already used in 51 jurisdictions across the U.S., giving 14 million voters greater choice and more power in elections. Voters in Washington, D.C. said YES to RCV in 2024, and Takoma Park has used RCV since 2007. A wealth of data, best practices, and expertise provides the city with a roadmap to simple and effective implementation.

I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Isabel Dawson

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This message was sent by Isabel Dawson via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Isabel Dawson at [isabelcdawson@gmail.com](mailto:isabelcdawson@gmail.com).

## Judy Penny

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**From:** rtreinhard@aol.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 1, 2025 1:35 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** elections input

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Richard Reinhard  
38 Maryland Ave Unit 501  
Rockville MD 20850

- Do you prefer to vote by mail? Yes.
  - Do you think there are enough drop boxes and voting centers? Yes.
  - Do you think there is enough transparency around funding campaign committees/slates/political action committees? No.
  - Are you satisfied with the city's efforts to enforce its campaign finance laws? No. Get on top of it.
  - Do you believe the city is promoting diversity, equality and inclusion appropriately? Yes.
  - Should the city implement the 2023 ballot measures? If so, which ones? Yes on term limits.
- \* Do you have other ideas to improve the city's election process? No excuses for making mistakes on who lives in the City of Rockville and who doesn't. No excuses for voters getting ballots late or not at all. Don't just point fingers at Montgomery County. Fix it. It's not rocket science. If the Board of Supervisors of Elections cannot get these simple things right, no one will have confidence in it.

## Judy Penny

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Gene Slothour-hudnall  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 1:14 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Gene Slothour-Hudnall and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
- 2) Effective Democracy - RCV gives voters the ability to better express their preferences, reducing strategic voting and toxic campaigning, allowing voters and candidates to focus on the issues.
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I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Gene Slothour-Hudnall

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This message was sent by Gene Slothour-hudnall via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Gene Slothour-hudnall at [gene.hudnall@gmail.com](mailto:gene.hudnall@gmail.com).

**Judy Penny**

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**From:** advocate@mail.actionbutton.org on behalf of Steve Breyman  
<advocate@mail.actionbutton.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 4, 2025 12:37 PM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Support Ranked Choice Voting for Rockville Elections

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Dear Sara Taylor-Ferrell,

I am Steve Breyman and I am a resident of Rockville. I am emailing to express my support for ranked choice voting (RCV) for Rockville elections.

Here are three reasons why RCV is an innovative voting method that would give Rockville voters more power and make their voices heard:

- 1) Stronger Representation - RCV promotes fair representation and elections better reflect the community, giving overlooked communities a voice on policy.
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I look forward to the Community Engagement Sessions and hope Rockville will move forward to use ranked choice voting in future elections.

Thank you,  
Steve Breyman

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This message was sent by Steve Breyman via [ActionButton](#), on behalf of Ranked Choice Voting Maryland. Please reply to Steve Breyman at [stevebreyman@icloud.com](mailto:stevebreyman@icloud.com).

**Judy Penny**

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**From:** Roselie Bright <roseliemail@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 1, 2025 9:04 AM  
**To:** cityclerk  
**Subject:** Rockville Elections listening session

**WARNING - External email. Exercise caution.**

Hi,

It would be good to offer a virtual listening session, in addition to in-person and email.

I prefer to vote by mail and am satisfied with the existing drop box system.

Q: Should the city implement the 2023 ballot measures? If so, which ones?

Of course, I prefer for the city to implement the measures I voted for. If the city is hesitating, there should probably be working groups and hearings specific to each measure.

For term limits, I caution that people often want them to try to refresh leadership. The problem with it is that there is a lot of learning done on the job, and the resulting expertise gets wiped out when the term limit is reached, even if the populace are happy with their performance. I'm for age limits, but not term limits.

Sincerely,  
Roselie Bright  
Rockville resident