



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

July 23, 2024

Speaker Adrienne Jones
State House, H-101
State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401

President Bill Ferguson
State House, H-107
100 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Speaker Jones and President Ferguson:

Residents across Maryland are beginning to focus on the November elections. On every ballot will be choices for federal office: president, senator and representative. In addition, voters in some counties will also have charter amendments to consider. It is these charter amendments, specifically the legal process for them to appear on the ballot, that we believe are in need of reforms.

Article XI-A of the Constitution of Maryland requires potential charter amendments to receive the signatures of 20% of the jurisdiction's registered voters or a minimum of 10,000 signatures. At the time this constitutional provision was ratified in 1978, Montgomery County had a population of 584,000. Today, Montgomery County has a population of over one million residents.

Given the population growth within Montgomery County and across the state, we are requesting that the General Assembly amend the Maryland Constitution to replace the existing requirements with more proportional metrics.

Having a standard fixed percentage of registered voters helps counties across Maryland. For example, our smallest jurisdiction in Maryland, Kent County, has a population of 19,200, according to the 2020 census. For a county like Kent County, 10,000 signatures is too high of a threshold and could never be achieved as that is more than half of the county's population and not all of the population are registered voters.

For perspective, the state of California requires that statutory ballot initiatives receive signatures equivalent to at least five percent of the votes cast in the most recent gubernatorial election to qualify for the ballot. That threshold increases to eight percent for a state constitutional amendment.

In comparison to the California standards, the current 10,000 signature threshold equates to 2.9% of Montgomery County's electorate, based upon the 343,371 residents who voted for governor in 2022. Viewed a different way, the 10,000 signature threshold is equivalent to only 1.5% of the county's 684,032 actively registered voters.

Updating the Maryland Constitution to reflect the state's population growth is essential for strengthening our local democracy.

We look forward to working with you, your colleagues in Annapolis, and local officials from across the state to enact these needed reforms.

In partnership,



Evan Glass
Councilmember, At-Large



Dawn Luedtke
Councilmember, District 7



Gabe Albornoz
Councilmember, At-Large



Kristin Mink
Councilmember, District 5



Laurie-Anne Sayles
Councilmember, At-Large



Sidney Katz
Councilmember, District 3



Andrew Friedson
Council President



Kate Stewart
Council Vice President



Natali Fani-González
Councilmember, District 6



Marilyn Balcombe
Councilmember, District 2



Will Jawando
Councilmember, At-Large