

HOUSE BILL 50

G1, P5
HB 174/25 – W&M

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
(PRE-FILED)

6lr0733
CF SB 5

By: Delegate Foley

Requested: August 25, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring that a special election be held at the same time as the regular
4 statewide primary and general elections that are held in the second year of a term
5 to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly if the
6 vacancy occurs on or before a certain date.

7 BY proposing an amendment to the Maryland Constitution
8 Article III – Legislative Department
9 Section 13

10 BY proposing an amendment to the Maryland Constitution
11 Article XVII – Quadrennial Elections
12 Section 2

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 (Three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses concurring), That it be
15 proposed that the Maryland Constitution read as follows:

16 **Article III – Legislative Department**

17 13.

18 (a) (1) In case of death, disqualification, resignation, refusal to act, expulsion,
19 or removal from the county or city for which [he] **THE INDIVIDUAL** shall have been elected,
20 of any [person] **INDIVIDUAL** who shall have been chosen as a Delegate or Senator, or in
21 case of a tie between two or more such qualified [persons] **INDIVIDUALS**, the Governor
22 shall appoint [a person] **AN INDIVIDUAL** to fill such vacancy from [a person] **AN**
23 **INDIVIDUAL** whose name shall be submitted to [him] **THE GOVERNOR** in writing, within

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 [thirty] **30** days after the occurrence of the vacancy, by the Central Committee of the
2 political party, if any, with which the Delegate or Senator, so vacating, had been affiliated,
3 at the time of the last election or appointment of the vacating Senator or Delegate, in the
4 County or District from which [he or she] **THE VACATING SENATOR OR DELEGATE** was
5 appointed or elected, provided that the appointee shall be of the same political party, if any,
6 as was that of the Delegate or Senator, whose office is to be filled, at the time of the last
7 election or appointment of the vacating Delegate or Senator, and it shall be the duty of the
8 Governor to make said appointment within [fifteen] **15** days after the submission thereof
9 to [him] **THE GOVERNOR**.

10 (2) If a name is not submitted by the Central Committee within [thirty] **30**
11 days after the occurrence of the vacancy, the Governor within another period of [fifteen] **15**
12 days shall appoint [a person] **AN INDIVIDUAL**, who shall be affiliated with the same
13 political party, if any as was that of the Delegate or Senator, whose office is to be filled, at
14 the time of the last election or appointment of the vacating Delegate or Senator, and who
15 is otherwise properly qualified to hold the office of Delegate or Senator in the District or
16 County.

17 (3) In the event there is no Central Committee in the County or District
18 from which said vacancy is to be filled, the Governor shall within [fifteen] **15** days after the
19 occurrence of such vacancy appoint [a person] **AN INDIVIDUAL**, from the same political
20 party, if any, as that of the vacating Delegate or Senator, at the time of the last election or
21 appointment of the vacating Senator or Delegate, who is otherwise properly qualified to
22 hold the office of Delegate or Senator in such District or County.

23 [(4) In every case when any person is so appointed by the Governor, his
24 appointment shall be deemed to be for the unexpired term of the person whose office has
25 become vacant.]

26 (b) In addition, and in submitting a name to the Governor to fill a vacancy in a
27 Legislative or Delegate district, as the case may be, in any of the [twenty-three] **23**
28 counties of Maryland, the Central Committee or committees shall follow these provisions:

29 (1) If the vacancy occurs in a district having the same boundaries as a
30 county, the Central Committee of the county shall submit the name of a resident of the
31 district.

32 (2) If the vacancy occurs in a district which has boundaries comprising a
33 portion of one county, the Central Committee of that county shall submit the name of a
34 resident of the district.

35 (3) If the vacancy occurs in a district which has boundaries comprising a
36 portion or all of two or more counties, the Central Committee of each county involved shall
37 have one vote for submitting the name of a resident of the district; and if there is a tie vote
38 between or among the Central Committees, the list of names there proposed shall be
39 submitted to the Governor, and [he] **THE GOVERNOR** shall make the appointment from

1 the list.

2 **(C) (1)** EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH **(2)** OF THIS SUBSECTION,
3 AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL SERVE UNTIL A
4 SUCCESSOR IS ELECTED UNDER PARAGRAPH **(3)** OF THIS SUBSECTION TO FILL THE
5 REMAINDER OF THE TERM.

6 **(2)** AN INDIVIDUAL APPOINTED UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL SERVE
7 FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM IF THE VACANCY OCCURS AFTER THE DATE THAT
8 IS 55 DAYS BEFORE THE DEADLINE FOR FILING CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY FOR
9 THE REGULAR STATEWIDE ELECTION THAT IS HELD IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE
10 TERM.

11 **(3)** IF THE VACANCY OCCURS ON OR BEFORE THE DATE THAT IS 55
12 DAYS BEFORE THE DEADLINE FOR FILING CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY FOR THE
13 REGULAR STATEWIDE ELECTION THAT IS HELD IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE TERM,
14 THE GOVERNOR SHALL ISSUE A PROCLAMATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE
15 OCCURRENCE OF THE VACANCY DECLARING THAT A SPECIAL PRIMARY ELECTION
16 AND A SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION SHALL BE HELD AT THE SAME TIME AS THE
17 REGULAR STATEWIDE PRIMARY ELECTION AND REGULAR STATEWIDE GENERAL
18 ELECTION THAT ARE HELD IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE TERM.

19 Article XVII – Quadrennial Elections

20 2.

21 **(A)** Except [for a special election that may be authorized to fill a vacancy in a
22 County Council or a vacancy in the office of chief executive officer or County Executive,
23 under Article XI–A, Section 3 of the Constitution] **AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION **(B)** OF**
THIS SECTION, elections by qualified voters for State and county officers shall be held on
25 the Tuesday next after the first Monday of November, in the year [nineteen hundred and
26 twenty-six] **1926**, and on the same day in every fourth year thereafter.

27 **(B)** **THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A SPECIAL ELECTION:**

28 **(1)** **TO FILL A VACANCY IN A COUNTY COUNCIL OR A VACANCY IN THE**
29 **OFFICE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OR COUNTY EXECUTIVE UNDER ARTICLE**
30 **XI–A, § 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION; OR**

31 **(2)** **TO FILL A VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF DELEGATE OR SENATOR IN**
32 **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY UNDER ARTICLE III, § 13(C) OF THE CONSTITUTION.**

33 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly
34 determines that the amendment to the Maryland Constitution proposed by Section 1 of this

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1 Act affects multiple jurisdictions and that the provisions of Article XIV, § 1 of the Maryland
2 Constitution concerning local approval of constitutional amendments do not apply.

3 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED**, That the amendment to the
4 Maryland Constitution proposed by Section 1 of this Act shall be submitted to the qualified
5 voters of the State at the next general election to be held in November 2026 for adoption or
6 rejection in accordance with Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution. At that general
7 election, the vote on the proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be by ballot, and on
8 each ballot there shall be printed the words "For the Constitutional Amendment" and
9 "Against the Constitutional Amendment", as now provided by law. Immediately after the
10 election, all returns shall be made to the Governor of the vote for and against the proposed
11 amendment, as directed by Article XIV of the Maryland Constitution, and further
12 proceedings held in accordance with Article XIV.