

14. Empower Voters in the Political Process

Far too many Marylanders are alienated from the political process. This unfortunate reality takes multiple forms. Some choose not to participate because they feel unrepresented, or that their voices are not heard. Others experience barriers to participation despite their best efforts to avoid them. No matter the case, the alienation is exacerbated by Maryland-centric versions of national problems. Our voters deserve better, and Peter Franchot will ensure our state government rises to meet their needs.

The significant expansion of the electorate Maryland witnessed via the vote-by-mail system utilized for its 2020 Primary Election is a perfect opportunity to expand our suffrage. Franchot will introduce and champion legislation that creates a universal, well-run, transparent vote by mail system in which every Marylander receives a ballot via mail that can be returned by mail or drop box. Moreover, Maryland will continue to offer in-person early and Election Day balloting.

Though we often decry gerrymandering at a national level, Maryland's federal and state legislative districts demonstrate this practice is not some far away spectre. By enacting an independent redistricting commission, Franchot will end the practice of politicians picking their voters, and re-orient our politics so that voters pick their politicians. This goes hand-in-hand with Franchot's commitment to introduce legislation that would create single member districts for the Maryland House of Delegates - ending the system of nearly unbeatable four-legislator slates, which insulate incumbents from challengers.

Unaffiliated voters, who register to vote but do not choose to affiliate with a political party, are a rapidly growing population in Maryland. This is true for young voters, whose ranks are growing thanks to Maryland's "universal" voter registration system. Under our current system, these voters are only able to participate in General Elections, effectively giving them half the civic voice of their counterparts in the Republican and Democratic parties. These voters, and our youth especially, deserve to be heard. Franchot will introduce legislation that would allow unaffiliated voters to participate in Primary Elections by affiliating with the party of their choice for that election.

