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February 28, 2014

Montgomery County Council
Stella Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Councilmembers:

Thank you on behalf of the entire Right to Vote Task Force for the creation of this effort to evaluate election laws and practices and for our appointment to the Task Force.

Since being appointed on November 26, 2013 the full Task Force has met for more than 6 hours to initially discuss the Actions assigned, assess topics associated with the Actions, and divide the workload across all members. This document is the interim report requested for delivery on February 28, 2014 on our progress to date and the Task Force is on track to complete a final report due by May 31, 2014.

We have organized ourselves into three subcommittees to focus on the tasks assigned, with each subcommittee having from four to five members. These subcommittees meet on a weekly or biweekly basis until the final report is ready for delivery. The subcommittees are:

Registration: This subcommittee is recommending changes that would increase voter participation, developing plans to promote same-day registration and recommendations to Council to strengthen such efforts, evaluate and make recommendations on high school voter registration efforts. The subcommittee is also evaluating whether the General Assembly should allow automatic voter registration or other 'opt-in' approaches to registration.

Access: This subcommittee is evaluating voter education programs and plans to promote early voting.

Voting Rights: This subcommittee is reviewing local laws and practices that may affect the right to vote and will be recommending changes that would strengthen the right to vote in the county.

The attached pages summarize the specific issues that each subcommittee is evaluating and assessing. Each subcommittee will discuss their specific issues and prepare position papers enumerating the Pros and Cons with each issue. The subcommittees will not necessarily make

specific recommendations to the Task Force, but rather present the topics and discuss the issues from multiple perspectives. It is the responsibility of the entire Task Force to discuss the issues and make final recommendations to the County Council. This ensures that each member can provide input on all issues and not just those associated with the assigned subcommittee. Task Force members are not restricted from participating on multiple subcommittees, if their personal time permits. It is the intent of the Task Force to present majority and minority recommendations to permit the council to appreciate all aspects of the issues considered.

In addition, the Council will soon receive two recommendations the Task Force has already discussed and approved. These recommendations were sent early to the Council because they would require earlier action to be effective in the context of the June 2014 primary election. The first recommendation encourages county agencies to adopt broader use of banner ads on major county government websites that direct people to the MC Board of Elections' voter registration site. The second recommendation changes the sample ballot mailing sent to all voters prior to early voting in the primary election. These sample ballot changes provide clearer and more succinct information about the multiple options available for voting.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Male', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Timothy Male, Chair
Right to Vote Task Force

**Montgomery County Right to Vote Task Force
Registration Subcommittee Status Report
February 24, 2014**

Scope of Work

The Registration Subcommittee will address issues related to voter registration, including the Council resolution's charges regarding voter outreach promoting registration and voting, same-day voter registration, and automatic voter registration.

Issues

Voter Education and Civic Education/Promoting Registration and Voting

The registration committee plans to address ideas to promote the process, including making people aware of the rights and opportunities to register and vote. Specifically, the subcommittee currently plans to consider the following:

- Materials that can be provided to educate potential voters about registration and voting, including early voting
- Early publicity prior to voter registration deadline regarding registration and voting options
- Information provided during high school drives
- Other issues related to registration at schools and colleges
- Civic education issues
- Recommendations to promote online voter registration information on state government websites

In light of the upcoming elections, the subcommittee has also focused attention making an recommendation of materials and information that can be provided by the Council for the 2014 elections:

- Posting of information online
 - On urging of the subcommittee, the Task Force passed a motion authorizing the chair to write a letter to the Council recommending online posting of a banner with a link to voter registration information on the general Council website as well as websites of other county departments and agencies
- The subcommittee is encouraging the task force to consider recommending paper materials be made available in county departments and agencies (bookmark-style)

Expansion of Same Day Registration

The subcommittee is considering issues around the expansion of same day registration to Election Day. The subcommittee is undertaking the following:

- Examining the prior legislation establishing same day registration during early voting
- Consideration of procedural issues for recommendation, for example, state constitutional amendment
- Investigation of potential for expansion and needs
- Consideration of potential Election Day procedure

Expansion of Voter Registration Agencies

The subcommittee is considering expansion of agency voter registration in Montgomery County beyond the agencies currently required to be designated voter registration agencies under the federal National Voter Registration Act of 1993. The subcommittee is considering:

- Which county agencies should be designated
- Responsibilities of the agencies
- Designation of a point person or registrar at each agency

Automatic Registration

The subcommittee will examine, consistent with the Council's charge, issues related to automatic voter registration. The subcommittee is considering the following:

- Discussion of "opt-in" v. "opt-out" voter registration
- Consideration of which agencies automatic registration would involve
- Links between online agency contacts and online voter registration system
- Voter registration outreach based on existing government agency information
- Databases and security issues

Additional Registration Issues

The subcommittee plans to address additional voter registration issues to expand the opportunity to register to vote through improvements to existing mechanisms. Issues under consideration include the following:

- Improvements to the online voter registration system, including additional ways to acquire electronic signatures from applicants, with the goal to increase the number of eligible citizens who can use the system
- Improvements to address updates at the polls that reduce the number of provisional ballots
- Improvements to other technology-driven voter registration procedures

*Montgomery County Right to Vote Task Force
Registration Subcommittee Status Report*

Process

The subcommittee has divided up issues among the members. Members are creating outlines of issues for circulation to other subcommittee members. The subcommittee will then work together to discuss the outlines, identify further questions and areas for follow up, discuss the proposed recommendations, and revise. The subcommittee will then present its proposals to the Task Force.

Subcommittee Members: Michelle Kanter Cohen, Larry Lauer, Cathy McDermott, Barbara Sanders

**Montgomery County Right to Vote Task Force
Access Subcommittee Status Report
February 22, 2014**

Scope of Work

The Access Subcommittee will review governing laws and regulations, as well as county policies and practices, that relate to voter access. We will recommend changes with the goals of improving access to voting and increasing voter participation in elections.

Process

The Access Subcommittee has met three times to identify issues of concern and begin to develop proposed short-term and long-term solutions. Thus far, the Subcommittee is working collectively on each of the issues identified below. Proposed recommendations that have been approved by consensus of the Subcommittee will be presented to the whole Task Force for its approval and recommendation to the Montgomery County Council.

At the February 17, 2014, meeting of the Task Force, the Access Subcommittee proposed a revision to the Montgomery County Sample Ballot in order to make more clear to voters the available options for voting. The Task Force approved the recommendation to revise the Sample Ballot, which is being sent to the County Council with a request that the Council approve the recommendation and forward it to the Board of Elections for final approval and implementation. The content for the recommended Sample Ballot is attached hereto. The Subcommittee identified additions to the Sample Ballot as a short-term priority given that the Council must approve the Sample Ballot for the June 2014 Primary by mid-March.

Issues

The Access Subcommittee has identified long-term issues for review related to voter education, voter turnout, and election administration.

Voter Education

The Subcommittee plans to evaluate ways to increase access to voting and voter participation through voter education by:

Developing methods to increase awareness among registered voters of recent changes to voting laws and regulations

Reviewing current information technology practices and developing recommendations to increase the availability of election-related information online and promote dissemination of such information electronically, potentially by:

- Making the Sample Ballot also available on the Board of Elections' website

- Creating an opt-in listserv for voters wishing to receive election information electronically
- Recommending that all Montgomery County departments and agencies include voting information on their websites

Proposing additional outreach efforts such as dissemination of information to voters through newspapers, local TV channels, and radio

Exploring ways to increase participation among young voters, potentially through development of a voter education app containing information about upcoming elections and voting processes

Promoting coordination between the Board of Elections and Board of Education

Voter Turnout

The Subcommittee plans to consider ways to increase voter turnout, including by reviewing successful voter-turnout strategies employed by other jurisdictions for potential use in local elections

Election Administration

The Access Subcommittee also plans to consider issues related to:

The expanded Early Voting program, including:

- Ways to promote the use of Early Voting
- The cost-effectiveness of Early Voting

Polling place procedures, including how to:

- Decrease wait times
- Quantify and publicize polling place wait times during Early Voting
- Improve waiting procedures for voters with special needs

How the Board of Elections makes decisions to change polling place locations

Ease of voting for voters in nursing homes

In addition to working on the issues identified above, members of the Access Subcommittee will continue to review governing laws and regulations, as well as county policies and practices, that relate to voter access and may identify additional issues for consideration prior to submission of the Task Force's May 31, 2014, final report.

Subcommittee Members: Dolly Kildee, Cristina Echavarren, Richard Jurgena, Zaida Arguedas, Lindsay Eyler Kaplan

Montgomery County Right to Vote Task Force
Voting Rights Subcommittee Status Report
February 17, 2014

Scope of Work

The Voting Rights Subcommittee will address issues related to voter rights, including the Council resolutions' charges regarding laws and practices that may affect the right to vote, and to review and recommend changes at the local level to uphold voting rights. Topic areas listed in relative importance are Suffrage, Electoral Structure, Political Parties, Election Integrity, Voter Registration, Voting Equipment and Others.

Issues

Suffrage - The Right to Vote

The Voting Rights Subcommittee plans to address ideas to ensure that the Right to Vote (RTV) is assured to all qualified people. Specifically, the subcommittee currently plans to consider the following:

- Youth Voting - extending the RTV to minors
- Prison/probation/parole/ex-felon - RTV
- Noncitizen - RTV
- Special elections
- Overseas and military voting
- Initiative, referendum, recall

Electoral Structure

The subcommittee is considering issues in the current structure of voting and how voters are currently represented. The committee is undertaking the following:

- Redistricting - Control political gerrymandering
- Multi-seat/at-large districts
- Ranked choice voting
- County vs. state control over elections

Political Parties

The subcommittee is considering ways to expand the voting opportunities especially in the primary elections to include the independents (non-aligned voters), which could be considered the 2nd largest party in the county. The subcommittee is considering:

- Open, closed, or hybrid primaries
- Candidate debate access
- Third-party ballot access

Election Integrity

The subcommittee will examine Election Integrity issues related to voting rights and will consider the following:

- Election monitoring by candidates or parties
- Voter IDs

Voter Registration

The subcommittee plans to address additional voter registration issues that might not be addressed by the Registration Subcommittee to expand the opportunity to register to vote through improvements to existing mechanisms. Issues under consideration include the following:

- Automatic voter registration
- Government agency voter registration
- Election Day registration/registration close date

Voting Equipment

The subcommittee plans to address additional voter access issues that might not be addressed by the Access Subcommittee to enhance voter access to the election process and mechanisms. Issues under consideration include the following:

- Voting equipment modernization
- Open-source voting equipment
- Optical scan machines

Other

The subcommittee plans to consider additional issues that might not be addressed by either the Registration or Access Subcommittees. These issues will become a higher priority if the *Voting Equipment* and *Voting Registration* topics are examined. Issues under consideration include the following:

- Election Day State Holiday
- Early voting
- Montgomery County Council Resolution 17-867, first four (4) points

Process

The subcommittee has divided the issues among its members. Members are creating outlines of issues for circulation to other subcommittee members. The subcommittee will then work together to discuss the outlines, identify further questions and areas for follow-up, discuss the proposed recommendations, and revise. The subcommittee will present its proposals to the entire Right to Vote Task Force.

Subcommittee Members: John Britton, Timothy Male, Stephen Mortellaro, Gary Featheringham, Mary Rooker