

Rockville City Council Drops Separate Voter Registration

By Beth Kaiman
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Rockville City Council unanimously approved legislation Monday night that eliminates separate registration for city elections and establishes campaign contribution limits and new reporting requirements.

Maryland is one of four states where municipalities can require voters to register separately for city elections. State legislation that would have prohibited separate registration in municipalities died in committee earlier this year.

Mayor Steven Van Grack said the system has discouraged voter registration. While there are at least 22,000 residents eligible to vote in Rockville, between 6,700 and 8,000 have turned out for recent elections, city officials said.

The Rockville council also put a cap on campaign contributions in the city for the first time. Under the new legislation, individuals and groups will be limited to contributions of \$1,000 per candidate. An election task force appointed by the mayor and council recommended a \$2,500 spending limit for groups.

Under the new reporting require-

ments passed by the council, candidates who have raised more than \$300 toward running for office in next November's city election will be required to report contributions to their campaigns.

Previously, a candidate only had to file reports with the city 30 days after the election. The new law mandates that campaign contributions be submitted twice before the election and again 30 days after the vote.