



Get Money Out – Maryland

Baltimore County Progressive Democrats Club

Baltimore Nonviolence Center

Be the Change Bmore

Caucus of African American Leaders of Anne Arundel

Chesapeake Climate Action Network

Common Cause Maryland

Don't Shop on Tuesdays

Do the Most Good

Indivisible Central Maryland

Indivisible Howard County

Indivisible Montgomery

J Walkers Action Group

League of Women Voters of Baltimore City

Maryland Legislative Coalition

Maryland Peace Action

Maryland United for Peace and Justice

Matthew Henson Community Development Center

National Association of Social Workers - Maryland

Our Revolution Maryland

Progressive Maryland

Randallstown Branch NAACP

Represent Maryland

St. Ignatius Justice & Peace Committee

Southwest Baltimore County Democratic Club

WISE –Women Indivisible Strong Effective

February 16, 2023

**Support: SB 39 - Ballot Access - Affiliating
With a Party - Unaffiliated Voters**

Charlie Cooper, Convener

For the People – Maryland is a coalition of nonprofit advocacy and community organizations that stands for political equality. Every citizen should have equal access to the ballot as a voter or as a candidate.

District lines should be fair to every voter, regardless of race, ethnicity, or party affiliation. The corruption of big money in politics must be eliminated, and the disproportionate influence of concentrated wealth reduced.

We support Senate Bill 39 because it improves access to the ballot for unaffiliated voters. In many elections for local offices and for seats in the General Assembly, the primary counts more than the general election in determining who actually serves. Many new voters or voters who are new to Maryland may not be aware that registering unaffiliated means they cannot participate in primary elections that determine who wins office.

This bill gives those voters over a week's more time to learn about the importance of an upcoming primary election and register with a party so that they can vote. It does not allow voters already registered with a party to switch and "cherry-pick" which party's primary election they want to vote in.

The bill also mitigates an unfair situation whereby those who have not registered can declare a party affiliation all the way up to election day, but those who have registered unaffiliated are barred from primary participation before they may even be aware that the primary is occurring. The bill will also give more voters a sense of agency by participating in a truly contested primary election, rather than simply in a general election where the outcome was not really in doubt.

Please promote voter participation by giving your favorable report to Senate Bill 39.