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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 1029 – ELECTION LAW -
REGISTERED VOTER LIST AND PETITIONS
(BALLOT PETITION MODERNIZATION ACT)**

March 1, 2024

By Charlie Cooper, President

Get Money Out–Maryland is an all-volunteer force seeking to get big money out of our political system and make elections fairer. Ten thousand Marylanders have actively supported our work. We believe that every citizen should have equal access to the ballot as a voter or as a candidate. We also work to regulate the role of big money in our elections and to reduce the disproportionate influence of concentrated wealth on our political system.

An important aspect of our democracy is that citizens have an opportunities to file petitions with the State Board of Elections to:

- Appoint a board to draft a new charter for a jurisdiction,
- Create a political party,
- Nominate an individual for office, or
- Place a question on the ballot.

SB 1029 modernizes the petitioning process by allowing for electronic signature collection and by creating a process to allow a voter to correct errors in the information associated with the voter's signature.

These new procedures will be efficient and effective and have already been evaluated on an emergency basis during the pandemic. Thus, we endorse this proposal because we hope and expect that it will remove barriers to political participation for ordinary citizens who wish to participate in the political process without wasting their time.

The bill also contains a provision that the State Board of Elections will publish new regulations to protect the security of voter lists provided to registered Maryland voters under Section 3-506 of the Election Law Article.

We enthusiastically support this proposal and strongly urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report for SB 1029.