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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE WAYS AND MEAN COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT
HOUSE BILL 40 – ELECTION LAW – POSTELECTION TABULATION
AUDITS – RISK-LIMITING AUDITS**

February 1, 2024

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization seeking to get big money out of our political system and make elections fairer. Every citizen should have equal access to the ballot as a voter or as a candidate and an equal say in governance. In our 11 years of work, we have signed up over 10,000 supporters.

The integrity of elections must be of paramount concern to State government. Cynicism about government and elections is already rampant for a variety of reasons. Computer security experts have advised that automated election technologies suffer from several kinds of vulnerabilities. In addition to simple mechanical failure or software bugs, these vulnerabilities can exist in the machines which record or tally the votes or in the network by which the tallied votes are reported to the State Board of Elections, and threats could come conceivably from inside an equipment or software maker or from an election administration organization. The fact that untrue charges have been made along these lines – and thoroughly disproven – does not mean that problems cannot occur in the future.

Maryland has increased election security by switching to optical scan machines that have a paper trail for every vote cast. We are enthusiastic about the audit procedures proposed in HB 40 that will take full advantage of the paper trail in order to verify that votes are recorded, tallied, and reported accurately. It is our understanding that the risk-limiting audit procedure required by this legislation meets the highest standards of election security, balanced with economy, that scientists and engineers have developed.

The regulations required in section (D)(2) of the bill on page 5 will be critical in determining that the audit procedures actually perform their protective function. Therefore, we applaud the creation of a workgroup to assure that the State Board receives a wide range of advice in setting criteria and procedures for the risk-limiting audits.

We enthusiastically urge a favorable report on HB 1172 in order to verify the accuracy of our election tallies and to chart a course where the public can have more confidence in the security of our elections.