



Testimony - HB 260, Public Financing Act – Fair Campaign Financing Fund –
Distributions
Favorable
House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee
January 21, 2026
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Honorable Chairwoman Wells & Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee:

SEIU Local 500 represents over 20,000 public sector and nonprofit workers across Maryland, including educators, public employees, and community service workers who believe deeply in a democratic system that is fair, accessible, and accountable to working people—not wealthy special interests.

House Bill 260 makes a straightforward but important improvement to Maryland’s public financing system by allowing distributions from the Fair Campaign Financing Fund to begin on July 1 of the year before an election, rather than January. This modest change will significantly strengthen the effectiveness of Maryland’s public financing program.

Publicly financed candidates—many of whom run on platforms centered on workers’ rights, strong public services, and racial and economic justice—often face structural disadvantages compared to traditionally financed candidates. Delaying access to public funds until January compresses campaign timelines, limits early voter outreach, and undermines the ability of grassroots candidates to build viable, competitive campaigns.

By allowing earlier access to funds, HB 260:

- Levels the playing field between publicly financed candidates and those backed by wealthy donors;

- Encourages more working-class and community-rooted candidates to run for office;
- Strengthens Maryland's commitment to reducing the influence of big money in politics; and
- Enhances voter engagement by supporting robust, competitive elections earlier in the cycle.

For SEIU Local 500 members, democracy is not an abstract concept—it shapes decisions about wages, staffing levels, school funding, healthcare access, and the quality of public services our communities rely on every day. A strong public financing system helps ensure that elected officials are accountable to voters and workers, not special interests.

HB 260 preserves the integrity of the Fair Campaign Financing Fund while making it more functional and fair. We believe this bill aligns squarely with Maryland's values and with the General Assembly's longstanding commitment to expanding democratic participation.

For these reasons, SEIU Local 500 respectfully urges the committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 260.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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