

SENATE BILL 471

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2002 Regular Session
2r1195
CF 2r1156

By: **Senators Pinsky, Conway, Dorman, Exum, Ferguson, Frosh, Green,
Hollinger, Hughes, Roesser, Sfikas, Stoltzfus, Stone, Teitelbaum, and
Van Hollen**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2002
Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Laws - Study Commission on Public Funding of Campaigns in**
3 **Maryland**

4 FOR the purpose of establishing a Study Commission on Public Funding of
5 Campaigns in Maryland; specifying the composition, powers, and duties of the
6 Commission; providing for the staffing of the Commission; requiring the
7 Commission to report its findings and recommendations, including suggested
8 legislative changes, to the Governor and the General Assembly by a certain date;
9 providing for the termination of the Commission; and generally relating to the
10 Study Commission on Public Funding of Campaigns in Maryland.

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
12 MARYLAND, That:

13 (a) There is a Study Commission on Public Funding of Campaigns in
14 Maryland.

15 (b) The Commission shall consist of the following 15 members:

16 (1) Three members of the Senate of Maryland, one of whom shall be a
17 member of the minority party, appointed by the President of the Senate;

18 (2) Three members of the House of Delegates, one of whom shall be a
19 member of the minority party, appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

20 (3) Nine individuals appointed by the Governor, including:

21 (i) A member of the State Board of Elections;

22 (ii) A member of the State Ethics Commission;

23 (iii) A member of a statewide organization concerned with campaign
24 finance practices, fair elections, and ethics in government; and

25 (iv) Six additional individuals.

1 (c) The Governor shall designate the chairman of the Commission.

2 (d) The Department of Legislative Services and the State Board of Elections
3 shall provide staff for the Commission.

4 (e) The Commission shall:

5 (1) Collect information relating to the practice of public funding of
6 election campaigns in other jurisdictions in the United States;

7 (2) Analyze current practices in Maryland relating to campaign
8 contributions, funding, and activities; including:

9 (i) The nature and extent of campaign contributions for elections in
10 Maryland by donors, including individuals, corporations, political committees, unions,
11 and other persons or entities, and the characteristics of such donors;

12 (ii) The changes or trends in the total amount of contributions to
13 candidates for elections in Maryland over the past several decades and the nature of
14 such changes or trends, including but not limited to changes in the contribution
15 patterns of any of the donors listed in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph;

16 (iii) The effectiveness of current Maryland election laws in
17 maintaining confidence in the fairness and openness of elections, in preserving the
18 democratic process, and in preventing undue influence or the appearance of undue
19 influence by particular donors; and

20 (iv) The effect that the increasing need to raise substantial
21 campaign contributions has on the ability of elected officials to perform their duties
22 effectively and to serve the interests of all of their constituents equitably;

23 (3) Receive testimony as the Commission considers appropriate;

24 (4) Consider the effects of public funding of election campaigns, and if
25 appropriate, make recommendations for implementing a system of public funding of
26 statewide and legislative election campaigns in Maryland;

27 (5) Examine the State election code as it relates to changes needed to
28 implement public funding of election campaigns; and

29 (6) On or before December 31, 2002, report its finding and
30 recommendations, including any proposed statutory changes to the Maryland election
31 laws, to the Governor, and, subject to § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the
32 General Assembly for consideration by the General Assembly in the 2003 Session.

33 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
34 July 1, 2002. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of June 30,
35 2003, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
36 abrogated and of no further force and effect.