

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 538 (Delegate Clagett, *et al.*)

Commerce and Government Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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

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This bill establishes a 15-member Study Commission on Public Funding of Campaigns in Maryland. The commission is required to: (1) collect information regarding public funding of State legislative campaigns in other jurisdictions in the U.S.; (2) identify the changes in the State election code necessary for public funding of State campaigns; (3) analyze current practices in Maryland relating to the financing of campaigns; (4) receive testimony where suitable; and (5) if appropriate, propose recommendations for a public campaign financing system in Maryland.

The Department of Legislative Services and the State Board of Elections are required to provide staffing for the commission. The commission is required to report its findings, recommendations, and any proposed statutory changes to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2002. The commission terminates June 30, 2003.

The bill is effective July 1, 2002.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any staffing requirements could be handled within the existing resources of the Department of Legislative Services and the State Board of Elections.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** There is a Public Financing Act applicable to the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor. No such act or fund applies to candidates for the General Assembly offices. As of 2000, the Federal Election Commission reports that there are 25 states with public financing provisions for state legislative candidates.

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** During the 2001 session, a similar bill (HB 1248) would have created a 19-member study commission. It passed the House but was not reported from the Senate Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee. Two other similar bills, (SB 707 and HB 809) were introduced during the 2001 and 1999 sessions, respectively. SB 707 was unfavorably reported from the Senate Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee and HB 809 from the House Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

**Cross File:** SB 471 (Senator Pinsky, et al.) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2002  
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Analysis by: Michelle L. Harrison-Davis

Direct Inquiries to:  
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510