

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2003 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 29  
Ways and Means

(Delegate V. Clagett, *et al.*)

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**Election Law - Study Commission on Public Funding of Campaigns in Maryland -  
Sunset Extension**

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This bill extends the sunset date for a 15-member Study Commission on Public Funding of Campaigns in Maryland from June 30, 2003 to June 30, 2004. The date by which the commission is required to report its findings, recommendations, and any proposed statutory changes to the Governor and the General Assembly is extended by one year from December 31, 2002 to December 31, 2003.

The bill is effective June 1, 2003.

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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:** The Public Financing Act, provides for a system of public financing of elections for candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. The Act established the "Fair Campaign Financing Fund," which is administered by the Comptroller. 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.

The Study Commission on Public Financing of Campaigns in Maryland was established in the 2002 legislative session. 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 and recommendations by December 31, 2003.

**Background:** Commission members were appointed in late August 2002. The commission held public meetings and work sessions at least twice monthly until January 2003. At the December 10 meeting, the commission decided it needed more time to explore the universe of potential campaign financing policies and their implications on the State's campaign finance system and make recommendations.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** Chapter 169 of 2002 (SB 471) created the 15-member commission.

**Cross File:** SB 40 (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 - January 31, 2003  
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