

**Department of Legislative Services**  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2025 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

Senate Bill 575 (Howard County Senators)  
 Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Howard County - Public Campaign Financing - Board of Education**  
**Ho. Co. 3-25**

This bill authorizes the governing body of Howard County to establish, by law, a system of public campaign financing for members of the county board of education. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2025.**

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** No effect in FY 2025. General fund expenditures increase by \$101,400 in FY 2026 and by ongoing amounts in future years. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	101,400	91,800	95,800	100,100	104,400
Net Effect	(\$101,400)	(\$91,800)	(\$95,800)	(\$100,100)	(\$104,400)

*Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** To the extent Howard County uses the authority under the bill to establish a system of public campaign financing for members of the county board of education, county expenditures increase by a significant amount beginning as early as FY 2026.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

## Analysis

### Current Law:

#### *Howard County Board of Education*

The Howard County Board of Education consists of seven elected members and one student member. Of the seven elected members, (1) one member is elected from each of the five councilmanic districts in the county, elected by the voters of that district, and (2) two members are elected at large by the voters of the county. The terms of the elected members are staggered, and each term of office begins on the first Monday in December after the election of a member and until a successor is elected and qualifies. The term of office of each member elected from a councilmanic district, beginning at the 2020 election, is four years. The term of office of each member elected at large, beginning at the 2022 election, is four years. The successors to the offices elected at the 2020 and 2022 elections, respectively, serve for a term of four years.

#### *Public Campaign Financing*

The governing body of a county may establish, by law, a system of public campaign financing for elective offices in the executive and legislative branches of county government. When establishing such a system, the governing body of a county must (1) specify the criteria for determining whether an individual is eligible for public campaign financing and (2) provide the funding and staff necessary for the operation, administration, and auditing of the system of public campaign financing.

Various requirements apply to a system established by a governing body of a county, including that it must (1) be strictly voluntary; (2) not regulate candidates who choose not to participate in public campaign financing; and (3) be subject to regulation and oversight by the State Board of Elections (SBE) to ensure conformity with State law and policy to the extent practicable.

The following jurisdictions have enacted local laws establishing public campaign financing systems for executive and legislative offices:

- Anne Arundel County – beginning with the 2026 elections;
- Baltimore City – beginning with the 2024 elections;
- Baltimore County – beginning with the 2026 elections;
- Howard County – beginning with the 2022 elections;
- Montgomery County – beginning with the 2018 elections; and
- Prince George’s County – beginning with the 2026 elections.

**State Fiscal Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$101,359 in fiscal 2026, which accounts for a 30-day start-up delay from the bill's June 1, 2025, effective date. This estimate reflects the cost for SBE to hire one financial compliance auditor to assist the director of candidacy and campaign finance with reviewing board of education candidates' requests for certification to participate in public campaign financing and their ongoing reporting. This estimate assumes Howard County implements a system of public campaign financing for members of the county board of education pursuant to the authority in the bill. SBE indicates that as more local public campaign financing systems are established and used, existing staff are not able to take on the increasing workload. The estimate includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$93,714
Operating Expenses	<u>7,645</u>
<b>Total FY 2026 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$101,359</b>

Future year expenditures reflect a salary with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** To the extent Howard County uses the authority in the bill, county expenditures increase by a significant amount, beginning as early as fiscal 2026, to provide the public funding distributed to participating candidates for the board of education and for any increased administrative costs (*e.g.*, contractual personnel) associated with administering the program for those candidates.

**Small Business Effect:** To the extent the bill results in additional campaign spending that otherwise would not occur, small businesses providing campaign consulting services and materials may meaningfully benefit.

### Additional Information

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 1130 and HB 1352 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Howard County; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 25, 2025  
rh/sdk

---

Analysis by: Arnold H. Adja

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510