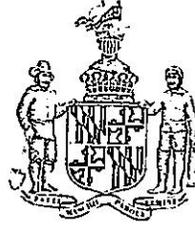


JON S. CARDIN
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Judiciary Committee

Chair
Civil Law and Procedure
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 16, 2020

**RE: HB 41 - Election Law – Campaign Finance
Violations – Injunctive Relief**

This bill would allow for a candidate to seek an immediate injunction against any opposing candidate who fails to file their pre-primary report 2 or pre-general report 2.

Current law allows for a candidate to violate campaign finance law without immediate repercussion. For example, if a candidate fails to file a campaign report, the fee is \$20 per day for the first six days that a pre-election report is overdue and \$10 per day thereafter. If the report is a post-election report, the fee is \$10 for each day the report is late. In both cases, the maximum fee chargeable by the State Board of Elections is \$500. During this penalty period, only the Secretary of State can seek an immediate injunction in hopes of enforcing transparency within the campaign finance system. As a result, a candidate can shield their contributions from public knowledge until after an election, and only have to pay a minor fine.

When candidates have to report their donors, voters are able to see who is trying to influence their votes. This enables them to make a more informed decision when they cast their ballot. A well-informed electorate is key to the health of our democratic system, and giving our citizens access to information about campaign financing empowers them to determine the future course of our government. Concealing the sources of campaign funding serves only special interests, at the expense of the public.

House Bill 41 has potential to enhance Maryland's democracy through transparency, and I urge a favorable report.