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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF HB 655 – ELECTION LAW–COUNTY COMMISSIONER
AND COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION–DISTRICT VOTING**

March 18, 2021

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization that was established just over eight years ago. We now have signed up more than 9,000 citizen supporters. We work in Maryland towards the goal that all citizens should have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance.

HB 655 corrects a problem in local jurisdiction and school system governance whereby Commission or School Board members representing a specific sub-district of the county are elected by all voters within the county. Voters in a particular district may have demographic characteristics that differ from the those of the county at large. And, likewise, voters in a particular district may see their interests differently from how people outside their district see their own interests. It is clear that at-large election of district-specific representatives can be used as a way to suppress the interests of a minority group that has majority status only within a particular district or districts of the county.

Reviewing the testimony on this bill in the House, we see that many of the officials who were elected at large seem to oppose it. They evidently do not want to have to run on their records and face the voters in the districts they represent. We strongly urge the EHE Committee to listen to the voices of the voters and to give a favorable report to **HB 655**.