



defending democracy using peaceful civil resistance

February 16, 2021

**Testimony on SB 0416
Public Financing Act—State Senate and House of Delegates Candidates and Matching Fund Revisions
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

Position: Favorable

Hold the Line Maryland strongly supports SB 0416. Hold The Line Maryland is a grassroots, all-volunteer organization, dedicated to preserving and insuring democracy through diverse actions, including the support of campaign-finance reform, election protection measures, and the expansion of enfranchisement. Democracy is under active assault, and we must do everything in our power to hold the line established by the founders of this great nation.

SB 0416 is an important part of campaign-finance reform, essential to restoring political capital to *all* people, not just those whose accumulated wealth and power allow them to control the outcomes of elections and thus further increase their wealth and power.

According to a 2019 report by the Brennan Center for Justice:

Two great trends are at odds in the financing of elections. In *Citizens United v. FEC*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that corporations have a First Amendment right to make unlimited expenditures in elections—raising the prospect of a flood of newly-legal special interest spending. In his sweeping dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens warned that people “may lose faith in their capacity, as citizens, to influence public policy” in the face of massive corporate political spending.

But there is a second, far more hopeful trend: the rise of small donor democracy. In the 2008 campaign, millions of small contributions energized the presidential campaign. For the health of our democracy, we must find a way to boost this positive trend so it is not overwhelmed by the new reality of special interest cash.

There is nothing more un-American than favoring a select few over the majority. Such imbalance damages the foundations on which this country was built. We urge you to support this legislation, which will enable us to continue to elect great leaders who will be able to spend their time executing the will of their constituents instead of pandering to special interests with deep pockets.

We urge a favorable report.

Kim and Sami Saydjari
Hold the Line Maryland