



**BILL:** SB0415

**BILL TITLE:** Public Financing Act - Matching Fund Revisions (Maryland Fair Elections Act)

**BILL SPONSOR:** Senator Pinsky

**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

**HEARING DATE:** March 30 , 2021

### **TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SB0415**

Represent Maryland is an all-volunteer, member and individual donor-funded group of activists and advocates who fight for democracy at the local and state level. Public Election Funds are the #1 solution that Represent Maryland advocates for in order to expand and secure democracy for the future.

Although our voter roles have grown over the last 150 years to include nearly all citizens of the USA, access to the resources needed to successfully run for public office has narrowed. Currently, successful candidates must be willing to accept large money donations from the smallest group of people or be able to fund their campaign themselves. There is nothing democratic about that. Through courting big money donors, candidates-turned-lawmakers grow increasingly out of touch with the needs and struggles of the average voter. This is very apparent in policy decisions that help corporations and the wealthy while putting more burdens on the working class.

The public election fund addressed in this bill has existed for a very long time and our current governor won his first term by using it. But sadly, the fund remains an afterthought for most lawmakers, including our current governor now that he no longer has a use for it. Requiring this fund to be funded each year is essential to changing it from a marketing gimmick used by upstart politicians into a serious and impactful alternative to accepting big money donations to win.

Sincerely,  
Cristi Demowicz, Chair  
Represent Maryland  
Maryland Voter-LD7

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Represent Maryland is a grassroots anti-corruption group of citizen advocates that #FightForDemocracy in Maryland.

Our democracy solutions include: Public Election Funds, Independent Redistricting, Special Elections, Ranked Choice Voting, Increased Ethics and Transparency, and Increased Voter Participation.

Learn more about our work at [www.RepresentMaryland.org](http://www.RepresentMaryland.org)

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miller, Treasurer