



**BILL:** HB0536

**BILL TITLE:** Public Financing Act - State Senate and House of Delegates Candidates and Matching Fund Revisions

**BILL SPONSOR:** Delegate Acevero

**POSITION:** FAVORABLE

**COMMITTEE:** Ways and Means

**HEARING DATE:** February 2, 2021

### **TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB0536**

Anthony Caruso, Member  
Represent Maryland

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. We formed in 2015 to fight against the influence of big money in politics and to ensure that everyone can participate in our democratic system of governance, regardless of financial status. 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 remain 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.

If this legislature wants the future of Maryland to be a democratic one, where all people's voices are heard and valued, you must act now to strengthen our only existing alternative funding source from which average people of various backgrounds and experience can fund their campaigns and win. Including candidates for state senator and delegate into the existing governors public election fund will ensure more people of average background, wealth and connection have a real opportunity to win their race, and therefore have input and influence over the future of Maryland. Maryland was built by a citizen legislature of hard working farmers and factory workers. We ask that you find this bill favorable in order to keep it that way.

Sincerely,  
Anthony Caruso, Member  
Represent Maryland  
Maryland Voter-LD6

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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