



**House Bill 949 – Campaign Finance – Collections by Membership Entities –
Noncampaign Political Activity**

Position: Support

Maryland REALTORS® supports HB 949 which clarifies Maryland campaign law to grant membership entities additional flexibility in how they collect campaign related donations with their membership dues.

Currently, like other membership organizations, the REALTORS® charge members for a political contribution along with their membership dues. Unlike the other portion of our membership dues, political contributions to the PAC must be voluntary. The REALTORS® include disclosure language in the dues statement to make that clear and about 20-30% of our membership pays the voluntary contribution.

Our association would like to change our process of how the current voluntary political contribution is charged. Rather than giving the members a choice of contributing to the PAC or giving nothing, we would like to be able to give members a choice between giving to the PAC or having that contribution go to a non-campaign related purpose or function of the association. Members would still be clearly informed about their right not to contribute to campaign-related efforts.

The REALTORS® met with the Board of Elections to discuss this alternative way to charge dues and voluntary political contributions and the Board of Elections did not believe the current law clearly permitted such a program. The Board indicated that the statutory authority would need to be clarified in order for the association to proceed.

HB 949 would permit the REALTORS® to proceed with such a program. Finally, the bill also establishes a cap on the amount of the political contribution of no more than 25% of the total dues. This cap currently does not exist in law.

For these reasons, we recommend a favorable report.

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