

The Honorable Anne Kaiser, Chair
And Members of the
Ways and Means Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB 0424 – Public Financing Act – Matching Fund Revisions – OPPOSED

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

HB 0424 creates a state budget mandate of at least \$4 million a year at a time of economic and pandemic crisis. It would also require \$100,000 or 3% of the fund for Administration of the fund each year. Even in good economic times this would be an extravagant waste of taxpayer money.

Is this such a vital fund that it would require the Comptroller to report to the State Board of Elections every month on the balance in the Public Funding Account? Wouldn't once every six months be sufficient?

The bill excludes "in-kind" contributions from being counted toward the match required by candidates/tickets utilizing public financing, but it doesn't limit these candidates/tickets from receiving in-kind contributions --either from individuals/companies/organizations in or out-of-state-- once they have received funds from the State public financing account.

HB 424 – states that the fund should have sufficient funds to fund two gubernatorial campaigns in the Primary Election and one campaign for the General Election. How will the State Board decide which two Primary campaigns and which General Election campaign will be awarded funds? In the Primary Election could both selected campaigns be from the same political party?

Maryland has too many needs to spend public tax dollars on funding political campaigns. Please give HB 424 an Unfavorable Report.

Sincerely,
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