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BILL NO.: SB 415

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

SPONSOR: Senator Pinsky

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 30, 2021

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 415 – Public Financing Act - Matching Fund Revisions (Maryland Fair Elections Act). This legislation is a mandate requiring the Comptroller to distribute public contributions to the Fair Campaign Financing Fund and directs an appropriation of at least \$4,000,000 per year to the fund.

Public financing is key to establishing a level playing field and taking the influence of money out of politics. When County Executive Olszewski ran for office, he made clear that pay-to-play politics have no place in Baltimore County or indeed the State of Maryland. By allowing voters to pool their finances to be distributed among candidates, public financing not only reduces the influence of moneyed interests, but gives the people the opportunity to fund a stronger candidate pool.

In 2020, Baltimore County is in the process of establishing a campaign finance model for local elections. This will ensure that money will not prevent qualified and talented candidates from seeking local elected leadership, and furthers the fight to establish a level playing field in participation in local government. SB 415 bill would further finance this public fund to continue this work at the State level.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 415. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs, at cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov.