

REPRESENT MARYLAND

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#FIGHT FOR

DEMOCRACY

BILL: SB0895

BILL TITLE: Declaration of Rights - Campaign Financing Right to Know

BILL SPONSOR: Senator Smith

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: FAVORABLE

HEARING DATE: February 23, 2022

Testimony in favor of SB0895

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. We also believe that a key tenet of a democracy is transparency. In the words of former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, "Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants". In short, robust transparency mitigates corruption.

Everyone deserves the ability to fund their campaigns and win without having to accept donations from wealthy special interests. Not only does this improve accessibility for those who otherwise don't have the money to run for public office, but it heavily lessens the impact that lobbyists have on our political system. It's currently unviable for candidates to win without accepting donations from wealthy entities and bending to their will. Public campaign financing gives candidates an alternative that encourages them to remain beholden to those who they'll actually be representing, which is critical in upholding democracy.

Given the aforementioned influence that money has over our political system, everyone deserves to know exactly how money is spent to affect it. The fact that special interests have so much sway over our political system would have gone completely unnoticed if not for a proper paper trail being made available to the public. Such transparency is crucial for democracy. If the public isn't aware of how money is used in their political system, they can't possibly vote in an informed way, and will instead unwillingly vote against their own interests, creating confusion and distrust.

Please find SB0895 favorable to fight corruption and help create a fairer, more transparent system.

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

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

Authorized by Represent Maryland PAC, T Miller, Treasurer