



**Testimony on SB 358
Public financing Act-Matching Fund Revisions
(Maryland Fair Elections Act)
Before the
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
Committee
February 23, 2022**

Position: Favorable

Indivisible Howard County-an organization with over 700 members- supports SB 358 because the bill addresses one of the fundamental issues of democracy infrastructure: reducing the influence of big money in politics and enabling candidates without large donor backing to seek office elected office.

We have all seen, in recent years, how vulnerable our democracy has grown and how urgent is the need to strengthen its underpinnings. A key component of a representative democracy is that it is, in fact, representative of the electorate. Fair representation cannot occur unless people from all walks of life and from all economic circumstances truly have the opportunity to seek elected office.

Since the Supreme Court ruled in the *Citizens' United* case, we have seen a steady erosion of the opportunity to run for public office for those without wealth or wealthy backers. The only way to counteract that erosion is to provide a public source of financing for candidates. SB 358 will provide the opportunity to candidates for the General Assembly that has already been provided to gubernatorial candidates. Maryland must join the ranks of states with the most inclusive voting laws.

We urge a favorable report.

Indivisible Howard County

Carol B. O'Keeffe

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