



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0358
PUBLIC FINANCING – STATE SENATE AND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

Bill Sponsor: Senator Pinsky
Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition
Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair
Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0358 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Our members work hard to support candidates for office in Maryland. We knock doors and phonebank and write postcards, and do anything we can to ensure that Marylanders participate in state and local elections. We believe in fair elections. We do NOT believe in big money in elections, nor do we want our elected officials to be beholden to any voices but those of their constituents.

Any expansion of public financing for elections of Senate and House of Delegates candidates is not only preferred, but required in this day where the interests of taxpayers and completely eclipsed by those of big business and special interests. Given how very much the legislation passed at the state level affects the lives of everyone in Maryland, it is even more critical that our elected representatives are really representative of the people. Their campaigns should be financed by small donations from their constituents.

Everyone benefits from public financing. More candidates will feel that they can compete, so you don't get the few wealthy, or highly connected people running. Better decisions will be made by those who are elected because they don't have to 'give back' to the few businesses and donors who supported them. Marylanders can make their voices heard more directly because their small donations really count.

It's more than time to do this. We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.