



Barbara Noveau, Executive Director, DoTheMostGood

Committee: Ways and Means

Testimony on: HB0291 – Election Law – Contested Elections

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 1, 2022

Bill Contact: Delegate Anne Kaiser

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grassroots organization with more than 3000 members who live in a wide range of communities—primarily in Montgomery County—from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that help ensure equity in voting, civil rights, education, and criminal justice; access to healthcare, transportation, and housing; and promote positive and trusting relationships between our communities and our state and local governments.

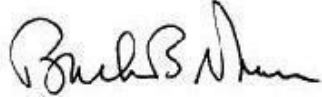
There is no shortage of close races in Maryland, especially if you look back to 2018. Close races open up the possibility of recounts, and with that, questions of how close the race must be and who will bear the costs.

HB0291 establishes whether the county or the candidate’s campaign pays for the recount based on the vote margin. If the margin is <.25% then the county pays. Beyond that and up to 5%, the candidate’s campaign pays. It also improves transparency by setting out clear financial disclosure guidelines for campaign-funded “Contested Election Committees”, including limits on donations to a contested campaign committee established by a campaign using public financing.

Campaign financing and public financing of elections are both in the spotlight lately as the impact of “dark money” becomes more apparent. DTMG supports leveling the playing field by transitioning to public financing to the greatest extent possible, and by adopting policies that move toward equity between public and privately funded campaigns. The provisions of this bill are a positive step in the right direction.

Therefore, DTMG strongly supports HB0291 and urges a FAVORABLE report on this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Noveau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" and last name "Noveau" clearly distinguishable.

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