

February 16, 2023

Testimony on SB 111
Election Law - Campaign Finance - Draft Committees and Exploratory Committees
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland is in support of SB 111, which would apply certain campaign finance requirements and prohibitions to draft committees and exploratory committees.

Maryland has a well-developed system of campaign finance law, a system that ensures everyday citizens can trace who is making donations and what special interest voices are being heard in that process. Given the amount of money that can be spent testing the feasibility of an individual's candidacy, we believe that both draft and exploratory committees should be required to adhere to the same level of scrutiny - it is critical that citizens be able to see who is funding these efforts.

One change we would ask the Committee to consider would be to consider specifying under section (F) that draft and exploratory committees may also make disbursements for digital outreach (i.e. mass emails, online advertising, text message advertising) as well as hosting large-scale events.

This bill will allow for greater disclosure and transparency around these committees, giving the public the opportunity to see who is spending time and money to influence our elections. For these reasons, we request a favorable report on SB 111.