

Chairman Feldman, and  
Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

RE: SB0951 Howard County - Board of Education - Terms and Public Campaign  
Financing [UNFAVORABLE]

This bill, SB0951, and several other bills that promote public financing, should be opposed for the following reasons

Public funding increases the distance between political elites (party leadership, candidates) and ordinary citizens (party members, supporters, voters) When political parties and candidates do not depend on their supporters or members neither for monetary contributions (membership, donations) nor for voluntary labor, they might be less likely to involve them in party decisions or consult their opinions on policy issues.

Public funding preserves a status quo that keeps the established parties and candidates in power. Public funds are often allocated among political parties and candidates in the legislature. This may make it more difficult for new political forces to gain representation.

Through public funds, taxpayers are forced to support political parties and candidates whose views they do not share Many believe that ordinary taxpayers should not be forced, through the public purse, to support political parties or candidates that they would never choose to vote for. Instead, they should have the possibility to decide if and when they want to donate money to a political party or candidate.

Public funds to political parties and candidates takes money away from schools and hospitals to give to politicians When introduced, public funding is often unpopular among the public. Public resources are scarce and needed for everything from schools and hospitals to roads and salaries for staff. To many people, using public funds to give to political parties and candidates

Political parties risk becoming organs of the State rather than parts of civil society If all or a substantial amount of the party income comes directly from the State rather than from voluntary sources, political parties risk losing their independence and become organs of the State, thereby losing their ties to the civil society.

For the above reasons, this bill should be reported as unfavorable.

Thank you,

Michael Fletcher  
Derwood, MD