



Barbara Noveau, Founder, DoTheMostGood

Committee: Ways and Means

Testimony on: HB0176– Local Public Campaign Financing Expansion to Additional Offices

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: January 31, 2023

Bill Contact: Delegate Jessica Feldmark

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grassroots organization with members in all districts in Montgomery County as well as several neighboring counties. DTMG supports legislation and activities that protect the fundamental rights of all Maryland residents, and which promote equity across all our diverse communities. HB0176 directly addresses these goals.

DoTheMostGood supports HB0176 which would authorize local counties to establish public campaign financing programs for offices beyond those already authorized in their jurisdictions, including State’s Attorney, sheriff, register of wills, judge and clerk of the Circuit Court, judge of the Orphans’ Court and elected member of the County Board of Education.

Ever since 2010 when the Supreme Court, in its Citizens United decision, struck down a prohibition on corporate independent expenditures for elections, thereby enabling corporations and other outside groups to engage in unlimited amounts of campaign spending, wealthy special interests have spent more and more to drown out the voices of small donors (everyday Americans), disproportionately by race, gender, income or zip code. In Maryland, the rise of corporate and large campaign contributions has made it harder for everyday Americans to even run for office to represent their own communities. Those of them who do run—or are already elected—are forced into dependency on these large donors, further diminishing the volume of the voices of their constituents, many of whom are disengaging from voting.

As we saw so clearly in the 2022 election in Montgomery County, public campaign financing for County Council candidates played a significant role in the diversity of the 2023 Council, 54% of whom are women and 45% are people of color. This is because public campaign financing allows candidates to run for office with small donations from their constituents, knowing that the public funds they receive will enable them to remain competitive with those accepting large and corporate contributions. Knowing this, prospective candidates of all backgrounds can run based on the strength of their ideas and commitment to their constituents—not access to money.

In sum, expanding public campaign financing programs to additional elective offices in Maryland’s counties will be better for the public, candidates and elected officials, and better for Maryland’s future.

DTMG strongly supports HB0176 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report on the bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Noveau', with a stylized, cursive script.

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