



## **TESTIMONY FOR SB0723**

### **Public Ethics - Conflicts of Interest and Blind Trust – Governor**

**Bill Sponsor:** Senator Feldman

**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative

**Coalition Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, co-chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0723 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.

As a precautionary measure in a time when we seem to be governed by a kleptocracy at the federal level, SB0723 heads-off conflicts of interest involving the Governor of Maryland, aiming to ensure that the Governor's personal financial interests do not influence their official duties.

The bill does this by requiring the Governor to place certain interests into a certified blind trust or divest of those interests within six months after taking the oath of office. It also mandates the Governor to enter into a nonparticipation agreement with the State Ethics Commission for any interests not included in the blind trust. Additionally, business entities seeking state grants, competitive awards, or contracts must report any interests held by the Governor or restricted individuals to the Ethics Commission.

Thus, this bill promotes transparency and accountability in the Governor's office, ensuring that the Governor's decisions are made in the best interest of the public, free from personal financial conflicts. This can help build trust in the government and ensure fair and ethical governance, ultimately benefiting the citizens of Maryland.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition steadfastly supports this bill and similar initiatives that result in good governance.