

# **SB 575 - Election Law - Local Public Campaign Fina**

Uploaded by: Joanne Antoine

Position: FAV

February 26, 2025

**Testimony on SB 575**  
**Election Law - Local Public Campaign Financing - Board of Education Ho. Co. 3-25**  
**Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports SB 575, which would provide Howard County Council the option to expand their public campaign finance program, the Citizens' Election Fund, to cover their board of education.

The Campaign Finance Reform Act (CFRA) of 2013 included language that provided county governments the authority to establish local public campaign financing programs for county council and county executive. Six counties and Baltimore City have since established programs. In 2016, a majority of Howard County voters voted in favor of creating a local program, now called the Citizens' Election Fund. Common Cause Maryland worked in coalition with partners to assist with the implementation of this program and continues to support the local government and Committee as they prepare for the 2026 election cycle.

In 2023, our partners at Maryland PIRG released a [report](#) analyzing data from the 2022 election cycle, specifically the first use of Howard County's Citizens' Election Fund. They found that small donors provided 97% of the funding for qualified candidates in Howard County, while only providing 8% of the funding to candidates who did not participate in the program. Also, that candidates who qualified for the program received an average contribution of \$139 compared to non-participating candidates who received an average donation of \$778. Qualifying candidates received on average 94% more contributions from individuals and nearly tripled their average contributions using matching funds. This demonstrates that as candidates gain experience using the programs and counties get through the hurdles of properly implementing these programs – they work as intended.

Public campaign financing continues to gain popularity in Maryland for a simple reason: particularly since the Citizens United decision, Americans across the political spectrum feel that our campaign system is disconnected from the populace, and that LLCs and wealthy individuals render regular Marylanders' voices meaningless in the current campaign finance environment. Small dollar public funding programs, on the other hand, lift up regular Marylanders' voices, and empower those with community-supported ideas who may not have connections to deep-pocketed interests.

While CFRA allows counties to address this problem for county council and executive candidates, the problem exists at every level of government. Common Cause Maryland supports lifting the voices of regular Americans in every election for every office, and so we request a favorable report on SB 575

**3-25 (SB575) Senate Committee Letter.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rebecca Doring

Position: FAV

SENATOR CLARENCE K. LAM  
SENATE CHAIR

MILLER SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
11 BLADEN STREET, ROOM 420  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SENATOR GUY GUZZONE  
SENATOR KATIE FRY HESTER



DELEGATE CHAO WU  
HOUSE CHAIR

DELEGATE NATALIE ZIEGLER  
HOUSE VICE CHAIR

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
6 BLADEN STREET, ROOM 217  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

DELEGATE VANESSA E. ATTERBEARY  
DELEGATE JESSICA FELDMARK  
DELEGATE PAM LANMAN GUZZONE  
DELEGATE TERRI L. HILL  
DELEGATE JEN TERRASA  
DELEGATE COURTNEY WATSON

THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401  
HOWARD COUNTY DELEGATION

February 12, 2025  
The Honorable Senator Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Education, Energy and the Environment  
The Maryland State Senate  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, 2 West Wing  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Howard County Delegation **voted in favor** of the following bill that will appear before your committee:

*SB575 -- Howard County - Public Campaign Financing - Board of Education Ho. Co. 3-25*

We request a favorable committee report. Please contact the Howard County Delegation office at [hoc1@mlis.state.md.us](mailto:hoc1@mlis.state.md.us) if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Clarence K. Lam".

Senator Clarence K. Lam, MD, MPH  
Senate Chair  
Howard County Delegation

Chao Wu, PhD

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Chao Wu".

Delegate Chao Wu, PhD  
House Chair  
Howard County Delegation

# **Vote Sheet HoCo 3-25.pdf**

Uploaded by: Rebecca Doring

Position: FAV

# Howard County Delegation

Voting Record – 2025 Session

Bill Number: LR0795

HoCo Bill Number: Ho.Co. 3-25

Vote Date: 2/12/2025

Final Action: Passed

## Motion:

Favorable                       Favorable with Amendment                       Withdrawn

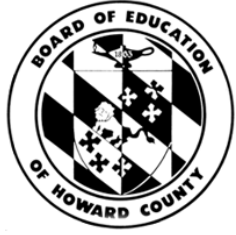
Name	Yea	Nay	Abstain	Excused
Lam, Clarence, Chair, Sen.	✓			
Wu, Chao, Chair, Del	✓			
Guzzone, Guy, Sen.	✓			
Hester, Katie Fry, Sen.	✓			
Atterbeary, Vanessa, Del.				✓
Feldmark, Jessica, Del.	✓			
Guzzone, Pam, Del.	✓			
Hill, Terri, Del.	✓			
Terrasa, Jen, Del.	✓			
Watson, Courtney, Del.	✓			
Ziegler, Natalie, Del.	✓			

Committee Reporter \_\_\_\_\_

**SB0575 Howard Co BOE Testimony 022625 for EEE - Pu**

Uploaded by: Staff Howard County

Position: FAV



**Board of Education  
of Howard County**

Jolene Mosley, *Chair*

Linfeng Chen, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

Andrea Chamblee, Esq.

Jennifer Swickard Mallo

Jacky McCoy

Meg Ricks

Antonia Watts

James Obasiolu  
*Student Member*

William J. Barnes  
*Superintendent,  
Secretary/Treasurer*

**Board of Education of Howard County  
Testimony Submitted to the Maryland Senate,  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 26, 2025**

**SB0575: FAVORABLE**

**Howard County - Public Campaign Financing - Board of Education Ho. Co. 3-25**

The Board of Education of Howard County (the Board) supports **Howard County - Public Campaign Financing - Board of Education Ho. Co. 3-25** for the opportunity to create robust participation in governance of the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) through availability of public campaign funds for Board candidates.

In Howard County, the Board is composed of seven members, two of which are at-large, and a student member elected by students for a one-year term. The Board is responsible for a more than one-billion-dollar budget and sets local education policy consistent with state and federal laws governing public education. Members of the Board play a vital role in engaging student, parent, and community member voice in the oversight and management of the HCPSS.

Candidates for the Board, however, cannot currently take advantage of public campaign financing that is authorized for executive and legislative positions elected to provide similar representation to the citizens of Howard County. Aiming to remedy this prohibition, SB0575 allows the governing body of Howard County to establish a system of campaign financing specific to Board elections. The system must follow existing law related to establishments of such financing. The Board supports public campaign financing as a measure often used to diversify candidate pools for elected office as well as lessen the influence of large/special interest donors.

For these reasons, we urge a FAVORABLE report of SB0575 from this Committee.