

**CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI**  
*Chief Deputy Attorney General*

**LEONARD J. HOWIE III**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**CARRIE J. WILLIAMS**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER**  
*Deputy Attorney General*

**ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY**  
*Chief, Equity, Policy, and Engagement*



**PETER V. BERNS**  
*General Counsel*

**CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA**  
*Chief Operating Officer*

**STATE OF MARYLAND**  
**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

**ANTHONY G. BROWN**  
*Attorney General*

March 18, 2025

TO: The Honorable Vanessa Atterbary  
Chair, Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Adam Spangler  
Legislative Aide, Legislative Affairs Unit

RE: **Senate Bill 27** – Election Law - Campaign Finance - Exploratory  
Committees - **Favorable**

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The Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 27** to expand transparency within the electoral process.

COMAR 33.13.23.01 defines an “exploratory committee” as “...an entity established by a prospective candidate for a public office to determine the potential candidate's viability for that public office.” While these regulations define “exploratory committees”, they do not provide oversight nor require compliance with State campaign finance transparency laws.

The distinct lack of explicit rules which exploratory committees may operate under creates a concern. **Senate Bill 27** seeks to eliminate this concern by (1) explicitly stating what exploratory committees may expend funds on and (2) prohibiting an exploratory committee from making any advance purchase of goods or services for the political committee of a potential candidate. Furthermore, the bill ensures that any equipment purchases by an authorized committee from the exploratory committee are made at fair market value. The bill states that, within 120 days after a potential candidate files their certificate of candidacy, or after the filing deadline has passed, all remaining funds must be returned in proportion to the contributors or to an organization as enumerated in the bill, and establishes the committees are not subject to any contribution limit.

**Senate Bill 27** ensures there are guardrails for exploratory committees. For the foregoing reasons, the OAG recommends a **favorable** report of **Senate Bill 27**.

cc: The Honorable Senator Cheryl Kagan  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee Members