



TESTIMONY FOR HB0568
Public Financing Act – State Senate and House of Delegates Candidates

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Behler

Committee: House Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, Cochair

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0568 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We are an association of unpaid citizen advocates—individuals and grassroots groups in every district across the state—representing and supporting more than 30,000 Marylanders.

HB0568 strengthens Maryland’s commitment to fair and transparent elections by expanding the scope of the Fair Campaign Financing Fund (FCFF). Under current law, the FCFF is used primarily for gubernatorial tickets. HB0568 broadens this system to include candidates for the State Senate and the House of Delegates, giving legislative candidates a viable path to run competitive campaigns without relying on large donors or special-interest money.

The bill also establishes clear qualifying requirements based on small-dollar contributions. For example, a State Senate candidate must collect a threshold number of donations between \$5 and \$250 to access matching funds. This ensures that public financing is grounded in genuine community support and encourages candidates to build broad, grassroots donor bases rather than courting major contributors.

We have all seen how dark money has distorted governance at the federal level. Unlimited outside spending and opaque funding streams have weakened public trust and made it harder for everyday people to believe their voices matter. HB0568 moves Maryland in the right direction. By expanding public financing to legislative races, the bill reduces the influence of big money, strengthens transparency, and supports a more accountable and representative democracy.

HB0568 directly supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. We work not only to provide everyday citizens with meaningful access to the legislative process, but also to ensure that Marylanders have clear, accurate information about their legislators' voting records. A strong public financing system helps level the playing field, encourages more diverse candidates to run, and ensures that elected officials

For these reasons, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB0568.