

My name is Shamioka Preston. I am a community advocate and a candidate for Howard County Council in District 4. I am writing in strong support of HB1378, the Maryland Corporate Power Reset Act.

I am running a publicly financed campaign because I believe government should be accountable to people, not to the biggest check in the room. Every decision I make as a candidate flows from that principle. It is the same principle at the heart of HB1378.

I know firsthand what it looks like when corporate interests drown out the voices of everyday families. When WR Grace proposed siting a toxic plastics incinerator next to homes in our Howard County community, it was residents: working parents, seniors, neighbors, who had to show up and fight to be heard. That experience changed me. It showed me how easily corporate power can override the concerns of real people when money is allowed to speak louder than community.

Marylanders are exhausted. We are exhausted by a system where unlimited corporate spending shapes elections before ballots are even cast, where policy is written in back rooms, and where families like mine have to organize just to have a seat at the table that should already belong to us.

HB1378 makes a clear and important statement: corporations are not people. The privileges Maryland grants them, limited liability, perpetual existence, the protections of our state, were never meant to include the power to dominate our elections and ballot campaigns. This bill restores that boundary.

Democracy cannot function when the loudest voice belongs to whoever can write the biggest check. As a candidate who has chosen to be funded only by the people I seek to serve, I urge this committee to support HB1378 and take this meaningful step toward reclaiming Maryland's elections for Marylanders.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Shamioka Preston
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