

HB0509_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

02/11/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz

Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#/0509- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Campaign Finance - Contributions by Gas and Electric Utility Companies - Prohibition

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0509, **Campaign Finance - Contributions by Gas and Electric Utility Companies - Prohibition**

As reported by WYPR *Maryland PIRG [Maryland Public Interest Research Group] warns about utility lobbying, saying it could affect your bill*¹

Maryland [lawmakers](#) who regulate [energy policy](#) were treated to dinner at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse last year, raising concerns about the influence of utility companies on public decision-making. That's according to a new report by the Maryland Public Interest Research Group (PIRG).

In that [report](#), BGE and Pepco spent about \$1.26 million lobbying on approximately 30 pieces of legislation, in 2024. All Maryland utilities spent over \$2 million.

The group warns that this spending could give utilities disproportionate influence over policy decisions, potentially leading to higher energy bills for Marylanders.

“As regulated monopolies, utilities have a unique ability to advance their interests—higher rates and profits—through public policy,” said Emily Scarr, a senior advisor at Maryland PIRG, in a statement. “This dynamic makes utilities’ political actions more vulnerable to the perception of corruption. We need clear guidelines and robust transparency for these activities.”

In response to this perception that legislators and legislation are influenced by this utility spending this bill will prohibit gas and electric utility companies doing business in the State from making campaign contributions to the campaign finance entity of a candidate for a nonfederal public office in the State or any other campaign finance entity organized in support of a candidate for a nonfederal public office in the State. Lobbying is ok but not using money to wield influence.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0509.

¹ <https://www.wypr.org/wypr-news/2025-03-10/maryland-pirg-warns-about-utility-lobbying-saying-it-could-affect-your-bill>