



## TESTIMONY

### HB0549 – Maryland Public Ethics Law – Virtual Currency and Domestic Partners

**Bill Sponsor:** Delegate Palakovich Carr

**Committee:** Government, Labor, and Elections

**Organization Submitting:** Maryland Legislative Coalition

**Person Submitting:** Aileen Alex, Co-Chair

**Position:** FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in support of **HB0549** 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.

HB0549 updates Maryland’s Public Ethics Law to reflect the realities of modern financial and family life. The bill requires public officials and candidates to disclose interests in virtual currency, ensuring that digital assets are treated with the same transparency as traditional financial holdings. It also updates the law to include domestic partners and registered domestic partners in the same disclosure requirements that currently apply to spouses. These are straightforward, commonsense updates that bring Maryland’s ethics framework in line with how people actually live and invest today.

For too many years, campaign financing has been shaped by the influence of large contributors, creating situations where candidates may feel pressure to align with the interests of those who fund their campaigns. While HB0549 is not a campaign finance bill, it strengthens the same foundation of public trust. When financial interests are fully disclosed, including newer forms of assets, it becomes harder for hidden conflicts to shape public decisionmaking. Transparency helps ensure that elected officials are accountable to the people they serve, not to private financial incentives.

HB0549 directly supports the mission of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. Our mission includes providing information to help inform voters. This bill supports that effort. Therefore, we respectfully urge a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB0549**.