



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Sponsor Testimony - Request for Favorable Recommendation
HB 1454 – Campaign Finance - Security Expenditures - Authorization

Greetings Chair Melissa Wells, Vice-Chair Kenneth Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor, & Elections Committee,

HB 1454 allows campaign funds up to a limit to be used for security expenditures associated with protecting candidates, elected officials, immediate family members, and staff. Similar legislation has passed in six (6) states with other states considering similar legislation.

Background: Recent studies indicate elected officials are reporting that harassment, in-person threats, and threats of violence against public servants have become more common, more severe, and normalized as an aspect of political life. A national survey of approximately 1,700 elected officials indicates that 43% of state legislators report receiving threats or attacks with 4% reporting physical attacks.

Women and minorities report more experiences with harassment, abuse, and threats. Women report receiving 3x to 4x more threats than men.

Impact: The impact of threats to elected officials is widespread to family, staff, colleagues, and neighbors who must be hyper vigilant.

Elected officials report higher rates of reducing public appearances. More elected officials are more likely to reconsider running for re-election due to threats.

Provisions: The bill outlines definitions for threats, allowable security expenditures, verification of threats, and reimbursement limits.

Table 1: State Statutes on Use of Campaign Funds for Security

State	Citation
California	Cal. Gov. Code § 89517.5

State	Citation
Colorado	Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-45-117
Illinois	Ill. Rev. Stat. ch. 10, § 5/9-8.10
Louisiana	La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 18:1505.2
Minnesota	Minn. Stat. § 10A.01.26
Wisconsin	Wis. Stat. § 11.1206

Source: NCSL <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/using-campaign-funds-for-candidate-security>

Due to a surge in threats against elected officials, more states are actively considering legislation to let candidates use campaign funds for security. This need has become a necessary cost of running for and serving in public office in a highly charged political environment.

I request a favorable recommendation for HB 1454 to enable candidates, especially those who cannot afford personal security out-of-pocket to utilize campaign funds to increase their security.

Cordially,

