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Seeking the Green Party nomination for Governor  
HB 1378  
FAV

In 2024, outside groups spent \$57 million on Maryland's congressional races, five times the previous record. A single super PAC spent \$27 million on one Senate race. Nationally, \$4.5 billion in outside money flooded federal elections, over a billion from groups that never disclosed their donors.

Those numbers will get worse. They have every cycle since 2010. Outside spending has increased roughly 2,800 percent compared to pre-Citizens United levels.

HB 1378 offers something no other approach in American law has tried. It does not regulate campaign finance. It does not restrict speech. It redefines what powers Maryland grants to the corporations it creates.

This is not campaign finance regulation. It is corporate law. The distinction matters. A corporation possesses only the powers the state confers through its charter. HB 1378 simply declines to grant the power to spend on elections. Businesses formed or authorized in Maryland cannot spend on elections or ballot questions. Violations mean losing the charter and giving back every dollar. The bill guarantees due process.

Citizens United addressed corporations that already possessed the power to spend. HB 1378 operates at the point of creation. It never grants the power in the first place.

I testified in favor of HB 584 before this committee on February 11th. That bill puts clean election protections in the Constitution. HB 584 is the ceiling. HB 1378 is the floor.

Maryland is not alone. At least 18 states have introduced corporate power reset legislation, including California, New York, Illinois, Virginia, and Vermont.

None of these efforts have passed yet. Someone has to go first. Maryland should be that state.

The Green Party has called for ending corporate influence in elections since before Citizens United was decided. Our national platform names the problem directly: a corrupt campaign finance system that enables corporate and wealthy elites to purchase political outcomes. That position is over two decades old. HB 1378 is the structural reform we have been calling for.

Seventy-nine percent of Americans believe large independent expenditures create corruption or its appearance. That includes 74 percent of Republicans. Sixty-three percent disagree with Citizens United outright. The public has been waiting for this. Corporations are not voters. They should not participate in elections. HB 1378 does not punish corporations for speaking. It declines to grant them a power they were never meant to have. I encourage this committee to provide a favorable report on HB 1378.

