



**TESTIMONY FOR
HB157 – General Assembly – Election Law - Campaign Finance**

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Palakovich Carr

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: IndivisibleHoCoMD

Person Submitting: Marijane Monck, Co-Facilitator Defend Democracy Action Team

Position: FAVORABLE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in favor of HB0157 on behalf of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is a 1500+ member organization comprising numerous action teams. We believe in fairness, tolerance, inclusion, and democracy. The Defend Democracy Team works on issues involving election integrity, campaign finance, and ethics in government.

HB0157 establishes a clear legal framework for exploratory committees in Maryland, which current law does not define. The bill sets standards for how these committees may raise and spend funds, while applying appropriate transparency and reporting requirements similar to those for political committees. It includes guardrails to ensure donations are properly tracked, funds are used only for permissible purposes, and remaining funds are handled responsibly. By bringing clarity and accountability to early campaign activity, HB0157 strengthens transparency, builds public trust, and supports a fair and reliable campaign finance system.

We respectfully urge a FAVORABLE report.