



SIERRA CLUB

MARYLAND CHAPTER

P.O. Box 278
Riverdale, MD 20738

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Testimony on: HB 1378 Corporations and Associations – Limitations on Election and Ballot Issue Activities (Maryland Corporate Power Reset Act)

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 4, 2026

The Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 1378. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision on [Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission](#) in 2010 opened the door to massive amounts of special interest money influencing elections through SuperPACs. The volume of special interest communication has become overwhelming and in some campaigns even overshadows the messages being presented by the candidates themselves.

[Recent legal research](#) has suggested a way states could prevent the harmful effects of the *Citizens United* decision without waiting for a major change in the membership of the Supreme Court or enactment of an amendment to the Constitution. Corporations, as artificial entities, have only the powers granted to them by the state in which they are created or by the other states in which they are authorized to do business. The ability of corporations to engage in election activity can simply be prohibited in the laws that provide for creation and authorization of corporations.

HB 1378 would amend Maryland's laws that govern the creation of corporations to explicitly state that corporations formed, organized, or authorized under Maryland law may not engage in election activity or ballot issue activity. The prohibition would apply to Maryland corporations and also to corporations created in other states that do business in Maryland.

Similar legislation is being considered in New York ([A09233/S08613](#)) and is being proposed in [initiative petitions](#) being circulated for signatures in Montana.

We believe that the *Citizens United* decision and the special interest SuperPACs that resulted have been causing major distortions of election campaigns, preventing rational discussion of the serious policy issues being presented by the candidates themselves. This harm to our democratic processes can be stopped by taking effective action to rein in SuperPACs.

For those reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB 1378.

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