

HB1378_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON HB#1378 - FAVORABLE
Corporations and Associations - Limitations on Election and Ballot Issue Activities
(Maryland Corporate Power Reset Act)

TO: Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1378, **Corporations and Associations - Limitations on Election and Ballot Issue Activities (Maryland Corporate Power Reset Act)**

BakerHostleter has reported that *States Tighten Rules on Foreign Influence and Political Spending*¹

A growing number of states are limiting political spending by foreign nationals and “foreign-influenced” entities, with some proposals sweeping far beyond existing federal standards.... Many state laws mirror federal law, covering individuals who are neither U.S. citizens nor lawful permanent residents, foreign governments and political parties, and corporations formed or headquartered abroad. Others sweep more broadly, extending the definition of “foreign-influenced” to include U.S. companies with modest or passive foreign ownership.

Ballotpedia reports “Twenty-three (23) states have enacted laws banning foreign nationals or governments from contributing to ballot measure campaigns. Seven states have enacted bans on direct contributions, while 16 states have banned direct and indirect contributions from foreign individuals or entities.^[4]”²

This bill offers to Maryland a path to reject corporate and foreign actors from becoming involved in elections in Maryland as if they were individuals. It empowers the people and not the corporations to make decisions on candidates and issues without their interference.

The bill will prohibit certain domestic or foreign entities formed, organized, or authorized in the State from engaging in certain election activities or ballot issue activities; requiring the State Department of Assessments and Taxation to adopt regulations that provide for the determination of violations, procedures for forfeiture and reinstatement of charter privileges, disgorgement, due process, and coordination with the Office of the Attorney General; etc.

Many states already have legislation adopted to address these problems, this bill will add Maryland to the list of states who see a problem in our elections and want to promote greater integrity in our processes.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#1378.

¹ <https://www.bakerlaw.com/insights/states-tighten-rules-on-foreign-influence-and-political-spending/>

² https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_foreign_spending_in_ballot_measure_campaigns