



TESTIMONY FOR HB0136

Maryland Public Ethics Law - Officials of the Legislative Branch - Gifts of Food and Beverages

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Vogel

Committee: Government, Labor, and Elections

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0136 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

As a constituent organization comprised of unpaid activists, we know that we don't generally have the access that professional lobbyists do. When those professional lobbyists are employees of large corporations with deep pockets, the difference in access is even more pronounced. There are many meals that are paid for by professional lobbyists that allow them face time with legislators that are nothing short of gifts.

This bill, if enacted, would require any meals or receptions include all members of the General Assembly and be open to the public. We firmly believe that anything that levels the field between special interests and your constituent's voices sends an important message about who you are listening to when you determine what legislation to pass.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.