

February 23, 2026

Written Testimony on HB 978
Submitted by the Electronic Security Association

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Electronic Security Association, which represents licensed electronic security and life safety providers in Maryland and nationwide, we respectfully urge your support for House Bill 978, the Safeguarding Election Candidates Using Reasonable Expenditures Act.

Election candidates and public officials are facing an increasing number of threats tied directly to their public service. In some cases, those threats extend to their families and homes. Current law can create uncertainty about whether reasonable security related expenses may be treated as impermissible personal use of campaign funds. That ambiguity may discourage individuals from taking preventative safety measures when they are most needed.

HB 978 provides clear guidance by confirming that campaign funds may be used for reasonable security related expenses when those needs arise from being a candidate or holding public office. This includes professionally installed and monitored security and alarm systems.

Importantly, HB 978 is narrowly tailored and preserves Maryland's existing campaign finance transparency and reporting requirements. The bill strengthens compliance by clarifying what is permitted within the current ethics framework rather than weakening oversight.

Public service should not require individuals to choose between personal safety and legal uncertainty. HB 978 establishes a common sense standard that improves clarity while maintaining public trust.

For these reasons, ESA respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 978.

Respectfully submitted,

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