

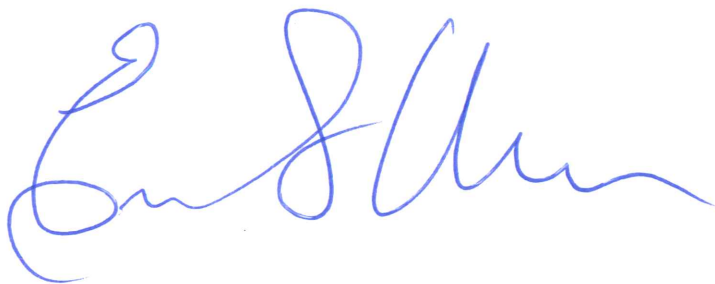
Chairman Ball and Members of the County Council:

I am Action Chair for the League of Women Voters of Howard County. I am here tonight to express the League of Women Voter's support for CR27-2016. This resolution introduced by Councilmen Weinstein and Terrasa would allow Howard County residents to vote on an amendment to adopt or reject "citizen funded campaigns".

A person should not be dissuaded from pursuing an opportunity to run for county office due to finances. This amendment could allow residents to run for office here in Howard County. It is the League of Women Voters national position that "the methods of financing political campaigns should ...enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process." All that want to serve should be given the opportunity to do so.

Although this resolution would not necessarily create "citizen funded campaigns" it will allow Howard County residents to decide if they want to adopt or reject this amendment. We think the residents should have the opportunity to decide if they would want to adopt this amendment so we ask the Council to support this resolution.

Erin Oliver



February 16, 2016

Testimony of Lisa Markovitz

President, The People's Voice, LLC

Support of CR 27-2016

The People's Voice and I support this resolution and ask the Council to please pass it. We believe that creating a Citizen Funded Campaign budget item is a good start toward assisting candidates to enter races and bring diversity and more citizen involvement in local government.

We all know that there is a widespread assumption that having large donations to campaign accounts, especially from interests that can be benefited by the position sought by the candidate, are worrisome to voters. I know that a lot of details still need to be decided regarding the program, how high the donations can go that are matched, what other criteria may be needed to participate, etc. The public looks forward to input into those decisions down the road as well, if this is passed and passed on the ballot.

Thank you for your consideration of getting things started with funding being the first step.

One amendment I recommend is to change page one, line 26-27 where it states the candidates would be FOR COUNTY COUNCIL OR COUNTY EXECUTIVE, OR BOTH, I believe it should read more clearly that it is just BOTH, period no OR statements.



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Testimony on CR27-2016

TO: Howard County Council
DATE: February 16, 2016
POSITION: Support

There is a problem in this country with low electoral participation. People are disenchanted with government and believe our democracy to be broken beyond repair. We can see this anger and frustration play out on the national stage among both Democrats and Republicans in the presidential race. However, too often the result is not a political revolution, but political stagnation in which eligible voters stay home. "What's the point?" they may ask.

As the electorate becomes increasingly diverse, with the U.S. population expected to become majority minority by 2044 (Maryland will cross this threshold in just 4 years!) it is critical that we ensure all eligible candidates have the resources to run competitive campaigns. Per capita income in Howard County is \$48,000 and more than 114,000 residents are living below the poverty line. For many of these hard working people, it is difficult to fully engage in the political process. They are priced out of running for office themselves and often believe any small donation they could afford would make no difference compared to those of big dollar donors. This leaves people disconnected, unengaged, and unrepresented.

Fortunately, we are here tonight promoting a solution. Creating a Small Donor Empowerment Program will help shift the focus away from the wealthiest of donors and back to everyday people. By providing matching funds to qualifying candidates who agree to only accept donations from small donors who live in the County, this program will allow for more diverse candidates to run for office, increase participation in the process, and result in more substantive legislative debate about the issues that affect the daily lives of all County residents.

We believe that everyday people--not corporations or the very wealthy--are the best experts on the issues that would improve their lives. They deserve a voice at the table and they deserve representatives who can dedicate their time to their constituents rather than dialing for dollars. By supporting publicly funding elections, you will be helping to rebuild the public's trust in government and our democracy.

My name is Mary Marker and I live at 7131 Willow Brook Way
Columbia, MD 21046

I would like to thank the council for the opportunity to speak about this important issue, and I commend Jon Weinstein and Jen Terrasa for introducing "Citizen Funded Campaigns" CR27-2016

I have lived in Howard County for the past 37 years and have always been involved with community activities. Over the past 9 years I have worked closely with volunteers on a variety of issues, and have been troubled by the feeling that these citizens, giving of their time and energy, feel that our elected officials do not hear their voices.

It is clear that it takes funding for a politician to be elected whether locally or nationally, but the trend in our political funding laws makes it difficult for the elected officials to have time to listen to the people that they represent. So much time is spent connecting with the organizations and individuals that can fund the elections that there is little time left for constituents. An invitation to a fundraiser with a VIP reception for those that can give at the highest level is the norm these days. Aren't the true VIP's all of the people you are elected to represent?

Given recent Supreme Court rulings, (until they are overturned), we know that we cannot totally stop the largest contributors who not only fund candidates, but also expect their positions to become priorities. It is as simple as looking at how difficult it is to maintain or pass legislation on the environment, and low-income housing. By supporting citizen funded campaigns that amplify the voices of small donors we can begin to level the playing field in our political system, and elected officials will be encouraged to spend more time working with the citizens that their districts represent.

Howard County has the distinction of leading in so many ways. We have wonderful schools, libraries, neighborhoods, open space and recreation facilities, and we have some of the most dedicated elected officials representing us in Howard County, in Annapolis, and in our nations capitol. I am proud to say that on the issue of Citizen Funded Campaigns, our own Congressman John Sarbanes is leading the way

nationally authoring the “Government By the People Act”. We as a county should continue to be a model for other jurisdictions and lead the way locally with Citizen Funded Campaigns.

I encourage you to vote in support of CR27-2016. This will enable the citizens of Howard County to have the opportunity to decide if getting “big money out of politics”, and supporting Citizen Funded Campaigns are the right choices for us. I am certain that when given a voice you will see that your constituents will work diligently with you on issues that will continue to make Howard County the leader that it is in Maryland and the nation.

Thank you

Howard County Council - Legislative Public Hearing

February 15, 2016

Testimony for CR-27 (Position: FAVORABLE)

Good evening council members, and thank you for the opportunity to speak before you. My name is Yasmin Shemali, and I am a sophomore Government and Politics major at the University of Maryland. I am originally from Columbia, Maryland, where I grew up and attended Wilde Lake High School. As a proud member of the Howard County community, it is an honor to testify today in favor of CR-27, a resolution proposing to establish a fund for "Citizen Funded Campaigns," as well as allowing Howard County residents to vote by referendum on whether this fund should be created.

I support this measure because I believe big money in politics is the root of many of the problems our society faces. As I learned about issues like the school-to-prison pipeline, food deserts, the obesity epidemic, and climate change, I started to see a common thread connecting these problems: billions of dollars being poured into campaigns by special interests and corporations to influence politics in ways that, quite often, go against the public's interest. This issue was exacerbated by the Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United vs. FEC*, which removed the cap on campaign donations by corporations and special interest groups.

That is why I decided to join MaryPIRG, the Maryland Public Interest Research Group, and work on their Democracy Campaign, of which I am the assistant coordinator. We aim to reduce the influence of big money in politics and to raise awareness about the prevalence of this issue. Last semester we collected over one thousand petitions asking Congressman Hoyer to sign onto the *Democracy for All* Amendment. We also attended a panel on big money in politics along with 140 other students. Although many people believe this is an issue that needs to be solved, we realize that we can do little to compete with the deep pockets of large corporations and interest groups.

Small donor matching programs present a way to start evening the playing field. These programs empower voters by matching their donations and encouraging elected officials to be more responsive to their constituents' concerns. A small donor matching program powered by public funding would give everyone, including college students, the power to make our voices heard.

We have the power to make sure our county elections engage every community member in the political process, and I believe passing CR-27 is the first step. It is vital that the council votes in favor of this resolution, which would allow the people of Howard County to vote on the establishment of a public fund for county elections. This would make Howard County a trailblazer in citizen-funded elections, following closely in the footsteps of Montgomery County, which enacted a small donor matching program last year. Change on the local level is often a powerful catalyst for change in other levels of government. Thus, there is a great opportunity here to start creating a norm of citizen-funded campaigns. Thank you so much for your time and for the opportunity to speak here tonight.

Howard County Council Legislative Public Hearing

Testimony in favor of Council Resolution 27-2016, February 16, 2016

Opel Jones, 7307 Summit Rock Road, Elkridge, MD 21075

Good evening Mr. Chair... County Councilmembers... Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I am here this evening to give testimony **in favor of** Council Resolution 27-2016, more specifically in favor of the proposed "Citizen Funded Campaign".

I'll be brief in my remarks. I'd like to focus on three main points;

- 1) Elected officials who are potentially bought and paid for through huge campaign donations:
 - Howard County citizens need elected officials who care about their needs. We need elected officials who spend time getting to learn about the people and about what's happening in the communities, versus spending most of their time fundraising for their next election.
- 2) Small donations = more people
 - If an elected official leverages public dollars to empower the people to make their voice heard through small donations it becomes more affordable to the average working person, which will equate to more donors. Additionally it's just good policy and good politics!
- 3) Allowing this to be voted on involves all voters of Howard County
 - A vote for this legislation merely places it on the ballot as a charter amendment that we can all vote on and send a message that the people are in charge, not a few wealthy donors who will be looking for reciprocation for their donations at some point.

Testimony on CR-27 by Doug Miller, 5437 Antrim Court, Columbia 21045, given Feb. 16, 2016

I am part of Get Money Out-Maryland, or GMOM, an all-volunteer, nonpartisan organization working to promote reforms that minimize the influence of money, and strengthen the power of citizens, in the political process.

Our primary task in the service of that goal is to persuade the General Assembly to make Maryland the fifth state to call for a convention of the states, under Article V of the U.S. Constitution, for the purpose of drafting a constitutional amendment that would overturn Supreme Court decisions that have effectively neutralized the ability of the people to regulate money in politics.

Get Money Out -- whose supporters statewide include a hundred Howard County residents -- endorses the effort of council members Weinstein and Terrasa to establish in Howard County a system that would empower average citizens by matching their small donations to candidates who decline to take large ones.

Poll after poll has found that an overwhelming majority of Americans, across party lines, believe that money has far too much influence on government. This perception has fed a climate of cynicism and apathy.

Indeed, many people I've tried to enlist in support of GMOM's efforts in Annapolis have told me, "I agree with your point of view, but getting big money out of politics is impossible, so I'm not going to waste my time trying."

Citizens hold this cynical outlook not just in regard to the federal system, but to state and local politics as well. Many Howard Countians are convinced that big-dollar campaign donations from developers and other well-heeled business interests give them an inordinate degree of influence in government decisions here.

I am not suggesting the presence of a quid pro quo relationship. But whether or not such a relationship exists, the culture surrounding the system through which we choose our leaders has grown to minimize the voices of rank-and-file citizens. As political campaigns grow ever more expensive, it can only get worse unless we make some changes.

And if you think Howard County is too small to attract super PACs, consider the following stories from a couple of local communities elsewhere.

In Parsippany, N.J. , last year, turmoil erupted in a Republican primary contest for town council when it was learned that a Washington-based super PAC run by a fund-raiser for *Democratic* candidates was making campaign contributions to the incumbent.

In 2009, in Wake County, N.C., campaign spending in the local school board race ballooned when Americans for Progress, a super PAC founded and funded by the arch-conservative billionaire Koch brothers, funneled money into a local group bent on dismantling a longstanding school desegregation program.

The charter amendment that council members Weinstein and Terrasa have proposed will serve as a bulwark against the erosion of public trust, and give candidates worthy of that trust a fighting chance against those who command big-money campaign contributions.

The roughly \$500,000 a year it would take to implement the citizen-funded campaign system represents 0.05 percent of the county's \$1 billion operating budget. I appreciate that we are still talking about real money coming from taxpayers, but the benefits of ensuring the integrity of our elections, and better engaging our citizens in them, will far outweigh that cost.

This investment in democracy promises great returns, and Get Money Out urges you to support it.

Howard County Council - Legislative Public Hearing

February 15, 2016

Testimony for CR-27 (Position: FAVORABLE)

Good evening Chairman Ball and other distinguished members of the Howard County Council. My name is Tom Klotz. I am senior Government and Politics major at University of Maryland, College park, and I am also a Howard County Resident. I am before you today to urge you to vote yes to CR27.

As a senior, I have been thinking a lot about the legacy that I will leave at the University of Maryland. I have dedicated countless hours of my time to having a diverse college experience, but I am eager to leave behind more than just my time. I want to leave behind something permanent, something everlasting. As public servants, I imagine you ask yourselves the same question. The answer to that question is the subject of my testimony.

Implementing a small donor matching program for Howard County elections would leave a legacy of equity and civic empowerment to be admired. These systems, among other things, have two incredible results; they ensure that the voice of the everyday citizen is as loud as the wealthy few, and they provide the everyday citizen access to funds necessary to secure public office.

First, small donor incentive programs ensure that the voice of the everyday citizen is as loud as the wealthy few. As a college student, I do not have a lot of extra money to contribute to elections, but imagine this: My small \$20 contribution becomes an \$80 contribution when matched 4:1 by public funds. Now I have a seat at the table! But it gets better, imagine that the single mother in Wilde Lake who works two jobs does the same with \$25, or the young man from Glenelg who returned to Howard Community College to become a Physical Therapy Assistant does the same. Now we **all** have a seat at the table.

Besides enhancing the contributions of the average Howard County resident, we've also shifted the incentives that lead candidates to seek contributions from the wealthy few. I do not blame any candidate running in a competitive race for needing money, and lots of it. But we, as a community, must ensure that the source of the money is representative of the interest of our entire community. Small donor matching programs change the incentives; a house party of 50 neighbors, churchgoers, swim team teammates, and book club members becomes your next big donation!

The second incredible result of a small donor matching program is they provide the everyday citizen access to funds necessary to secure public office. The price tag for running a county council campaign is largely out of reach for many members of our community. But with a small donor incentive program in place, everyday citizens, representative of the average person, could run a competitive campaign. The U.S. Census Bureau has found that the population of Howard County has increased in the last decade by almost 34%. It is imperative that we implement a small donor matching program so that the diversity of our community is reflected in our representative bodies for years to come.

Thank you councilmembers for your time. Again, I urge you to vote yes on CR-27.

Testimony in Favor
Resolution CR27-2016
George Howard Building
February 16, 2016
7:00 pm

Meagan Braganca

First I'd like to thank Councilmembers Terrasa and Weinstein for introducing this resolution at such a pinnacle and much-needed time.

Ever since the Supreme Court's alarming 2010 Citizens United decision, the same people who've been contaminating our air and water with toxic pollution have been contaminating our democracy with toxic money.

Big-polluting, big-money campaign donors are drowning out the voices of everyday Americans. They're doing it by dumping hundreds of millions of dollars into elections — and warping our government's priorities in the process.

The culmination of this toxicity has been devastating for common-sense environmental policies in this country, and it's taken its toll. It could be argued that the apex of this precipitous downfall came last year with the horrifying display of willful ignorance by a United States Senator who held up a snowball on the Senate floor, as evidence that climate change does not exist. Why would a federal-level elected official do this, while in the process refusing to listen to scientists, experts, a majority of Americans, and reason?

Money. The only plausible answer is money.

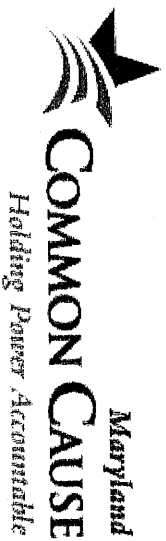
So how can we avoid the same pernicious poison from affecting us here in Howard County? We can't know what the future holds. But let me tell you what *could* happen: Developers could give enormous amounts of money to future candidates running for council offices and soon thereafter turn the county into an over-developed hotspot of chaotic commercialization. Big polluters could buy their influence and spread their noxious byproducts throughout our county and beyond. Trees surrounding our neighborhoods and parklands could die, fishkills in our streams could be a regular occurrence, our farmlands could be rendered unusable, and the only things left living in these 251 square miles could be asthmatic humans.

Or we could chart a different future, one free from the corrupt influence of big money. One where we continue our legacy of high quality of life - where our kids go to the best schools and enjoy beautiful parks and wilderness and waterways. One where life wins.

We don't know what will happen, and we cannot control future events. But what we *can* do is to create a campaign financing system that will endeavor to allow the greatest chance for the best possible future. The proverbial planting of the tree whose shade we will never sit in.

Creating a future free of big special interest money would create the best possible

scenario for a healthy, prosperous county. Where any candidate can run on his or her ideas, not the size of his or her finances. When the voices of small-dollar donors are heard, with the amplification of their support through public matching funds, fairness and democracy will win in the end. This resolution would put the citizens of Howard County in control. And paving the way for this type of future is what makes a good society into a great one.



February 16, 2016

**Testimony on Council Resolution 27-2016:
The Citizen Funded Campaigns Charter Amendment
Howard County Council**

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland strongly supports Resolution 27-2016, which would authorize the Council to establish a standing fund to create a small-donor funded election system.

Public funding has become a focus from the national to the local level over the past few years. Congressman Sarbanes' has legislation that would create a program for Congressional campaigns. The General Assembly took a significant step forward in 2013 by enabling local governments to establish public funding for local races, and followed that with legislation in 2015 restoring the funding source for the state's gubernatorial Fair Campaign Finance Fund. (The fund was used by Delegate Mizour and Governor Hogan in their respective 2014 campaigns.)

Montgomery County took the lead at the local level, passing the first program in Maryland in September of 2014. Common Cause Maryland was proud to provide research and guidance to the County in drafting its legislation, and we are very excited to see Howard County entering this conversation. Resolution 27-2016 would take the first, critical step towards creating a program for Howard County Council and Executive races, and would make Howard County a leader on investing in a thriving democracy.

Citizen funded campaigns serve a number of critical benefits:

- They allow candidates from diverse backgrounds to run for office, without needing the major donor networks that would otherwise be essential launch a campaign;
- They allow every day citizens to invest in, and feel invested in, their democracy;
- They allow candidates to run a campaign focused on communities and citizens;
- They ensure that special interests cannot gain a special influence in elections — or the policy decisions made after the election is over.

An editorial recently questioned the need for a program of this nature in a County that does not have a legacy of corruption. We agree that this Council has a legacy of listening to constituents and not the special interests. This program would ensure the continuation of that legacy, as it would ensure that even as campaigns grow more expensive and increasingly reliant on large donors, candidates will have an alternative. Candidates will have the option of running campaigns based on small dollar donations, focusing on their constituents, and keeping democracy in Howard County robust and vibrant.

Public funding strengthens our democracy by keeping special interests out of elections and voters back in. We urge a favorable vote on Resolution 27-2016, which is a critical investment in elections in Howard County.

Testimony submitted by Common Cause Maryland

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**Prepared Statement of Every Voice
Before the Howard County Council
February 16, 2016 Legislative Public Hearing
On Council Resolution 27-2016,
The Citizen Funded Campaigns Charter Amendment**

February 16, 2016

Chairman Ball, Vice Chairman Weinstein, Members of the Council, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Resolution 27-2016, the Citizen Funded Campaigns Charter Amendment. This critically important legislation would reduce the influence of large donations in county elections and raise the voices of everyday citizens.

Resolution 27-2016 would make way for the creation of a robust small-donor funded election system. This voluntary system, would allow candidates to run for office with the support of small donations from friends, neighbors, and other members of the community they wish to represent, instead of relying on big donors. In approving this measure, Howard County has the opportunity to elevate the voices of everyday residents in County elections. In making way for a system that reduces the influence of special-interest money by elevating small donors, the Council will cement it's commitment to the notion that big ideas and not big money should be at the center of the county's elections and political process.

Systems like these don't just work in theory; they are at work in practice in states and municipalities all across the country. In the state of Connecticut, 77 percent of state legislators elected in 2012 used the state's strong small-donor matching system. In New York City, a similar robust system allows individuals from all across the city to participate in the political process as candidates. Since these candidates no longer have to rely on large donations to run for office, they have been able to diversity their pool of support and spend more time talking about issues that their communities care about.

When Howard County acts, it won't be alone. In 2014, the Montgomery County Council created the first post-Citizen United small-donor reform system. In 2015, voters in Maine and Seattle went to the ballot to approve two small-donor systems that would raise the voices of ordinary people in their political processes. These victories show a national movement that is no longer waiting on a gridlocked Washington, D.C. to fix our broken campaign finance system. From coast to coast, people are ready for bold solutions to reduce the influence of big money in politics.

Howard County is ready to be a leader in the state and in the nation on this issue. We urge you to join the growing number of bright spots around the nation that are enacting bold solutions to reclaim our democracy.

Howard County Council Public Hearing, February 16th, 2016 CR27: "Citizen Funded Campaigns"

Position: SUPPORT

Maryland PIRG is a state based, citizen funded public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members across the state including Howard County. For forty years we've stood up to powerful interests whenever they threaten our health and safety, our financial security, or our right to fully participate in our democratic society. One of our top priorities is our Democracy for the People Campaign to curb the impact of big money on our democracy and empower everyday citizens.

We thank the Howard County Council for exploring a small donor incentive program for your County and we urge the County Council to move towards enacting small donor campaign financing for local elections by passing Council Resolution 27 for Charter Amendment on the November ballot. This Charter Amendment will allow Howard County voters to approve the "Citizens' Election Fund," which is the foundation of a new way to fund elections for City Council and County Executive.

The new program is designed to encourage candidates to voluntarily reject large and corporate contributions by providing limited matching funds for small donations from their constituents. This serves the dual purpose of reducing corporate and mega donor campaign spending and re-engaging the community in the electoral process.

BACKGROUND: Recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court, like the *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* decisions have lifted limits on the amount of money that corporations and the super wealthy can spend to influence elections giving them increased influence over who runs for office, what issues make it onto the agenda, and often who wins.

The meteoric rise of election spending since these Supreme Court decisions means candidates and elected officials are often trapped spending an increasing amount of time fundraising from big donors, giving them less time to hear from and serve their constituents. It has also exacerbated the already shrinking faith that citizens have in their elected officials, as evidenced in the recent midterm elections, which saw the lowest turnout since World War II.

Local offices are not exempt from these issues – in fact, we expect the removal of restrictions on aggregate contributions limits to lead to increased spending by mega donors on local elections. Our research has found that this decision will ultimately cause \$1 billion in increased spending through the 2020 elections from less than 3,000 mega donors. ¹

A 2015 NYT poll found that, “Americans, regardless of their political affiliation, agree that money has too much influence on elections, the wealthy have more influence on elections, and candidates who win office promote policies that help their donors.”ⁱⁱ

- 66% think “wealthy Americans have more of a chance to influence the elections process than other Americans.”
- 84% think “money has too much influence on American political campaigns.”
- 85% think “candidates who win public office promote policies that directly help the people and groups who donated money to their campaign most or some of the time.
- 77% support “limiting the amount of money individuals can contribute to political campaigns”

WHAT YOU CAN DO: We need create a campaign finance system where every citizen, regardless of wealth has more or less equal opportunity to influence the actions of our government. To restore political equality in our democracy, campaign contributions should be limited to what the average American can afford and candidates should only be able to raise money from the people they would represent.

The fight to overturn Citizen’s United will likely be decades long, but there is a lot we can do now. While the Supreme Court has decisively ruled against restrictions on spending levels and corporate electoral spending; they have created an opportunity for us to use a carrot instead of a stick. And that is why we are here today. In Howard County the carrot is a “citizen funded elections” system that encourages candidates to voluntarily reject large and corporate contributions by providing limited matching funds for small donations from county residents.

In Maryland in 2014, Montgomery County became the first county to establish a small donor incentive program for county races. On Thursday, a Maryland Senate Committee will hold a hearing on a bill to establish a similar program for state races. And Maryland Congressman John Sarbanes is the author of the Government by the People Act, which would enact this program at the national level.

By passing Council Resolution 27, Howard County will take a step forward in making this community the next to lead the state and country towards this new way to fund elections.

In addition to strengthening our local democracy, the program will serve as example for the rest of the state and country. By putting small donor incentives into action in Howard County and in communities across the state and country, the public will see the effectiveness of the program, building the support and track record we need to pass state and federal reforms.

There is no doubt that the Supreme Court has dealt our democracy a significant blow. But it is within our power to reverse the decision, empower ordinary Marylanders in our elections, and reclaim our democracy for the people. You have an incredible opportunity in Howard County, but it will only work if pass CR27. Thank you.

ⁱ McCutcheon Money, Maryland PIRG and Demos, October, 2013, <http://marylandpirg.org/reports/mdp/mccutcheon-money>

ⁱⁱ Americans’ Views on Money in Politics, June 2, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/06/02/us/politics/money-in-politics-poll.html>

Suzanne Geckle
12650 Emory Farm Ln
Sykesville, MD 21784

Testimony in Favor of CR27-2016

I am a strong supporter of citizen funding of elections for two main reasons:

First, as a voter my voice will more likely be heard. Developers, businesses, and special interests would have no more influence than me. I would more likely be viewed as an equal constituent. Even if our elected leaders do not favor their large campaign donors over the small contributor the perception is that they do. Citizen funding of elections will empower the voter and make it more likely that he/she would be an active participant in the workings of the county.

Secondly, I believe that good people who are interested in public service are intimidated by having to raise large sums of money and thus are less likely to run for office. When speaking with candidates it seems that raising money is the least favorite part of any campaign and is often an impediment to a successful bid for office. Candidates would still have to raise money but the small dollar donations would be much more important and candidates could spend more time talking to individuals about the issues most important to them.

Although I am in favor of CR27 I am disappointed that the proposal would not take effect until 2022. I would prefer that it be in place for the 2018 election cycle but I am still hoping it will be approved by the Council.

I was one of several volunteer that was out collecting signatures in support of citizen funded elections. Twice I was at the Hickory Ridge Village Center and once at the Kings Contrivance Village Center. While not a scientific poll, the vast majority of people that we spoke to are in favor of campaign finance reform in the county.

In conclusion, campaign finance reform is needed all over the country and I am proud and thankful that Council Members Terrasa & Weinstein have proposed it in Howard County. I urge the rest of the Council to support it so that the measure can go to the people of Howard County to vote on.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for me to speak tonight.