



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

HB 72 - Election Law - Fair Campaign Financing Fund

POSITION: Support

BY: Barbara Schnackenberg & Nancy Soreng Co-Presidents

DATE: February 7, 2017

League members across Maryland believe that public funding enables candidates to compete more effectively for political office, promotes citizen participation in the political process, and reduces the influence of campaign contributions on decision making by elected officials.

We supported HB 485 Election Law - Fair Campaign Financing Fund - Income Tax Check-off that passed during the 2015 session. However, there is concern that the funding sources that were established by that bill for the Fair Campaign Financing Fund (FCFF) might not be adequate for the next and future gubernatorial elections. This bill, **HB 72**, makes sure that the Fair Campaign (FCFF) has the resources to serve the purpose for which it was created.

The legislation requires the State Board of Elections to do an analysis of the sufficiency of revenue in the FCFF prior to a gubernatorial election. If the fund hasn't received enough revenue from the sources dedicated to fund it (including a check-off on the individual tax return, direct contributions to the Board of Elections, and fees, fines and penalties collected by the Board of Elections) to provide a full public contribution for two gubernatorial tickets in the primary election and one gubernatorial ticket in the general election, the governor would be required to include an allocation in his budget bill in the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which a gubernatorial election will be held. This allocation would have to be sufficient to fund a qualified candidate per the requirements of the Fair Campaign Finance Act.

We urge a favorable report on HB 72.