

Progressive Cheverly testimony in support of CB-99, the Fair Elections Bill
October 23, 2018

A wise person once said "If nothing changes, then nothing changes."

Hello, I am Katherine Barns Soffer of the Legislative Committee of Progressive Cheverly. Progressive Cheverly is in strong support of CB-99, the Fair Elections Bill. As you likely know, we are a grass-roots educational and advocacy organization of some 100+ members, for going on 14 years.

Progressive Cheverly has consistently supported campaign finance reform at various government levels over the years. As we can all observe, there is enormous discontent with our political process around the country and in our own communities.

A part of this is the reality, and the public perception that money interests have too much influence on the actions of government officials. Sadly, this has led to disillusionment among voters, who believe their votes make no difference because candidates are thought to be beholden to the outside interests who bankroll their campaigns rather than the people they represent. This legislation would speak to an important part of this problem, while also opening up the democratic process by potentially expanding the pool of candidates that can afford to run serious campaigns for elective offices.

CB-99-2018, while providing for some limited public matching funds, is not an expensive bill. It establishes caps on public expenditures. In fact, the estimated cost of the program is about \$1.50 per capita per year. Out of the County's \$4 billion budget it is estimated to cost about \$1.2 to \$1.5 million, This is only three hundredths of 1% of the total County budget!

That's a small price indeed to pay for such an investment in our democracy and the integrity of our elections, the kind of investment Howard and Montgomery Counties have already made by enacting a small donor matching program.

Thank you, Councilwomen Lehman and Toles, and Councilmen Franklin and Patterson, for your sponsorship of CB-99. We call on all Council members to join you in supporting this important step to restore public confidence in our electoral process!

From our prospective, if nothing changes, then nothing (much) changes.

Thank you for your attention.