

Legislative Testimony (*online submissions) 6-5-2023

Timestamp	Full Name	City	Zip Code	Are you representing yourself?	What organization or whom do you represent?	Legislation	Position	Remarks	Attachment
05/31/2023 17:53:18	Jennifer Kunze	Baltimore	21205	No	Clean Water Action	Bill 19-23aaaa: Bring Your Own Bag Plastic Reduction Act (amended)	Support	Clean Water Action is a national environmental organization with 40 years of policy work in Maryland protecting clean water, clean air, and healthy communities. We support the Bring Your Own Bag Plastic Reduction Act, and request a friendly amendment to exempt customers paying with programs like SNAP and WIC from the fee on paper bags. Please find attached a factsheet signed by 14 organizations supporting 4 key components of effective and equitable plastic bag reduction policies. We encourage the Council to review the 4th element of the factsheet and amend Bill 19-23 by adding the following language to the bill: "The fees in this section shall be waived for any shopper who uses state or federal supplemental nutrition assistance programs (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps, food coupons or other type of allotment issued under 7 U.S.C. 2011-2036, or with food instruments, food vouchers, other type of certificate issued under 42 U.S.C. 1786 (Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children), or with Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), for any part of the transaction." This language is very important to prevent the legislation from creating disproportionate burdens on customers paying with SNAP, WIC, and similar programs. Federal rules do not allow funds from these programs to pay for bag fees. Assessing a fee on all customers and all transactions regardless of the use of SNAP/WIC places a disproportionately high burden on customers who rely on SNAP and WIC, who may not have cash available to add to their purchase to pay for the bag fee. This amendment is a common-sense element of bag reduction policies that many cities, counties, and states have taken to reduce single-use bag use while avoiding creating disproportionate burdens for the customers least able to afford it. Please pass Bill 19-23, with an amendment to ensure a fee is not assessed on SNAP/WIC customers. Thank you, Jennifer Kunze Maryland Coordinator Clean Water Action	YES
06/05/2023 1:23:43	Earl Bradley	Annapolis, MD	21403	Yes		Bill 19-23aaaa: Bring Your Own Bag Plastic Reduction Act (amended)	Support	I strongly support this legislation. It will reduce adverse effects on streams, fish, and wildlife, reduce litter, and reduce dependance on plastic.	
06/05/2023 7:51:01	JoAnne Zoller	Glen Burnie	21061	Yes		Bill 19-23aaaa: Bring Your Own Bag Plastic Reduction Act (amended)	Support	The measure of a bill can be approached by examining the best and the worst consequences of its passage. The best consequence of this bill's passage will be a huge reduction of the shameful and distressing plastic waste of single-use plastic bags. What a relief that will be! Conservatives and liberals have voiced their support of this goal throughout the prolonged consideration of this bill. This bipartisanship in itself is remarkable, and to be celebrated. The worst consequence of the passage of this bill, according to its opponents, is possibly "too many reusable bags" in each household. In my household, with two cars and regular trips to the grocery store, there is no such thing. We keep 10 reusable bags in each car to accommodate grocery and other shopping from either car. We have learned to return the bags to our cars soon after unpacking them at home. Additional reusable bags at home come in handy for carrying items out. We have been using some of our reusable bags for 20 years, and they're still good to go. No fears here--this bill, which has been so carefully amended to make it work in our county, is ready to launch. I strongly support its passage, and am ready to celebrate a cleaner, healthier Anne Arundel County!	
06/04/2023 19:14:41	Rebecca	Severna Park	21146	Yes		Bill 19-23aaaa: Bring Your Own Bag Plastic Reduction Act (amended)	Support	I support the Bring Your Own Bag Plastic Bag Reduction Act because I care about our waterways and the health of the Chesapeake Bay. I believe that we as citizens can learn to adjust and I believe that business owners are smart enough to find ways to adjust as well. I ask that the members of the county council vote Yes on this bill. Thank you.	
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05/24/2023 16:10:34	Britt Griswold	Annapolis	21409	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support	I support this campaign finance bill. I see it as an insurance policy against a candidate "buying" the election when they have lots of money but poor qualifications. This law would allow those with little money but good qualifications to at least be an underdog with a chance at taking on monied interests. I think it elevates the ability of ideas and speech to compete with Money to allow voters to hear ideas that will allow them to make informed voting decisions. It is a voluntary program that offers a path, but does not require participation.	
05/30/2023 20:47:27	Michelle Koul	SEVERNA PARK	21146-3357	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support	Please support this bill.	
06/03/2023 8:29:18	Emily Scarr	Baltimore	21218	No	MaryPIRG Citizens Lobby	Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support		YES
06/04/2023 8:07:49	Renee Cantori	Annapolis	21403	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support	I am writing in support of public campaign financing bill, 25–23. There are many dedicated and passionate citizens who would love to represent the interests of their communities, but they are put off by the immense cost of running a campaign. Having access to public campaign financing would allow them to run, to give them and their communities a voice. The financial cost to the county is a tiny fraction of our budget. The gain would be creating a space for these candidates who want to serve the interests of the people who LIVE here and NOT the interests of large donors. This type of financing is already legal in the state of Maryland and has helped to bring in candidates from all parties who do not have access to "big money" from any special interests. For example, Hogan used state funding in his successful 2014 campaign for Governor. Creating a fund in Anne Arundel county would allow candidates seeking office in county elections to do the same. Please support 25-23 (and also pls consider expanding the financing so that it coversnother county campaigns down the slate, not just the CE and county council elections). Thank you for all you do to help make our county a better place.	
06/04/2023 9:16:37	Jennifer Sell	Severna Park	21146	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support	I am urging all members of the council to support this legislation. First, it supports all candidates, regardless of what party they are from. Thus, it is a rare instance of an issue that is party neutral and that all should be able to get behind. Second, it weakens the voice or large institutions that are often able to overpower the voice of the individual people. While this bill may be a threat to these groups, they are not actually constituents and it is the voice of the constituents that should be heard the most. Last, this type of financing has been adapted by our local peer counties. Not adapting this bill would provide another instance in which Anne Arundel County is lagging behind our peer, making our county an increasingly undesirable place to live and work. For these reasons, I ask all council members to support this bill.	
06/04/2023 23:21:56	Peggy Williams	Severna Park	21146	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Oppose	I oppose this bill. I do not want tax money going to pay for someone's campaign. It also appears that this bill will hinder the ability for a group like the Central Committees to donate to a candidate who accepts matching campaign funds from the county.	
06/04/2023 23:27:43	James Elbourn	Severna Park	21146	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Oppose	Tax money should not go to funding campaigns.	
06/05/2023 10:56:05	Morgan Drayton	Odenton	21113	No	Common Cause Maryland	Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support		YES

Legislative Testimony (*online submissions) 6-5-2023

Timestamp	Full Name	City	Zip Code	Are you representing yourself?	What organization or whom do you represent?	Legislation	Position	Remarks	Attachment
06/05/2023 10:56:45	Alan Lang	Pasadena	21122	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Oppose	I oppose Bill 25-23, Public Campaign Financing. At a time of high inflation, increasing crime, and poor student test results, spending tax payer money to those running for office seems to be a frivolous use of public money. The Office of Budget estimates that this legislation will cost tax payers between 2 and 3 million dollars and could cost up to \$8 million. I maintain that this money would be better spent hiring Police, First Responders or Teachers, if spent at all. Instead of spending between \$3 million and \$8 million on political candidates, we could: •Fund between 60 and 160 jobs paying \$50,000 or • Provide between 300 and 800 salary increases of \$10,000 to existing police, first responders, or teachers. I am concerned that groups and organizations are barred from contributing per Section 1-12-109 on page 8, lines 28-34. I could understand limiting the amount that PACs, corporations, labor unions, and political party central committees could donate to \$250, but to completely bar them seems to be violating freedom of speech. Political clubs of both parties recruit candidates and make relatively small donations to help them get started. Under this bill, these actions would be prohibited. Finally, I am concerned about the source of these small donations. It seems possible that groups could obtain lists of county addresses and make donations in their name. A few months ago, people were interviewed in the Annapolis area about making multiple donations to candidates, and several denied having made any.	YES
06/05/2023 11:01:20	Joi Howard	Crofton	21114	Yes		Bill 25-23a: Public Campaign Financing (amended)	Support	I support this bill for the following reasons: 1. This is about Good Governance, not Politics • > It's been used, successfully, in Maryland by both Democrats and Republicans • > For those that choose to participate, it prevents donations from specials interest groups that have typically backed Republicans (think Corporate PACs; Developer LLCs) as well as Democrats (think Labor Unions) 2. It's Worth the Investment • > Helping prevent government corruption - or even the appearance of corruption - is one of the best things we can spend taxpayer dollars on. And this bill is projected to cost less than one percent of the County Budget. • > Spending a small fraction of the county budget on amplifying the voices of county residents is worth the investment. • > Spending a small fraction of the county budget on creating a system that will diversify the candidates that we have to choose from is worth the investment. • > Cleaning up our democracy from the influence of monied interests isn't going to be free. The fiscal impact of this bill is literally the cost of cleaning up our democracy - and it's worth it. 3. It works • > This system has been used in several other Maryland counties and it has been proven to work. • > It's available at the state level for candidates for Governor - and it worked for Hogan when he got elected to his first term. 4. It's legal • > The fact that it's a voluntary program that candidates choose to participate in makes the prohibition on donations from corporations and the cap of \$250 on individual donations legal. • > For those that choose to participate, it prevents donations from specials interest groups that have typically backed Republicans (think Corporate PACs; Developer LLCs) as well as Democrats (think Labor Unions)	
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06/04/2023 23:26:06	Peggy Williams	Severna Park	21146	Yes		Resolution 21-23: County capital program planning process workgroup	Oppose		
06/04/2023 23:35:49	James Elbourn	Severna Park	21146	Yes		Resolution 21-23: County capital program planning process workgroup	Oppose		
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Reducing Harmful Plastic Pollution in Anne Arundel County

Introduction

Plastic bags pollute our communities, clog our storm drains and streams, and harm plants and animals. Like other plastic products, plastic bags contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and environmental justice concerns at every stage of production and disposal, worsening the climate crisis, and they cannot be effectively or efficiently recycled.^{1,2} Banning single-use plastic bags is an important upstream solution that protects our environment and helps build toward a zero waste future. Anne Arundel County can join a growing list of jurisdictions across Maryland, the U.S., and the world in reducing plastic pollution by passing Bill 19-23 and banning plastic bags.

Key Components of Effective & Equitable Plastic Bag Reduction Policies

Below are four key components of effective and equitable plastic bag legislation drawn from best practices around the world.^{3,4} Each key component is followed by suggested bill language that is based on legislation passed in other jurisdictions. Plastic bag policies can include many provisions; the four components in this document represent a floor, not a ceiling.

Clear Definitions: Effective plastic bag policies must clearly define single use plastic bags and reusable bags to ensure that retailers, customers, and officials understand what is prohibited and what is allowed.

- **Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bag:** A bag made exclusively or primarily of plastic derived from natural gas, petroleum, or a biologically-based source such as corn or other plant sources,⁵ which is provided to a consumer at the point of sale to carry purchases and is not a reusable bag or a paper carryout bag. A single-use plastic carryout bag is not a bag used while shopping to contain fruit, vegetables, nuts, meat, fish, baked goods, or other items prior to checkout or a bag used to contain a newspaper, garments or dry-cleaned clothes, prescription drugs, or bags sold in packages containing multiple plastic bags.⁶
- **Reusable bag:** A bag with stitched handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for reuse and is:
 - Not made of plastic film; or
 - is made of durable cloth, fiber, hemp product, or other machine washable material.⁷

Ban on Single-Use Plastic Carryout Bags: Effective plastic bag bans are simple, straightforward, and do not have loopholes. They ban all single-use plastic carryout bags regardless of thickness. Suggested language:

- A store or retail food establishment shall not provide a single-use plastic carryout bag to any customer.

Fee on Paper Bags: In addition to banning single-use plastic carryout bags, effective plastic bag laws also incentivize customers to bring their own reusable bags, usually by charging a fee on paper bags. Suggested language:

- A store shall provide customers with paper carryout bag(s) at the point of sale only if customers pay a fee of at least \$0.10 (10 cents) per paper carryout bag.⁵

Paper Bag Fee Exemption for Low-Income Customers: To ensure that plastic bag policies do not have disparate impacts on low-income residents, equitable laws include fee exemptions for customers who use SNAP, WIC, and other food assistance programs.⁸ Suggested language:

- The fees in this section shall be waived for any shopper who uses state or federal supplemental nutrition assistance programs (SNAP), commonly known as food stamps, food coupons or other type of allotment issued under 7 U.S.C. 2011-2036, or with food instruments, food vouchers, other type of certificate issued under 42 U.S.C. 1786 (Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children), or with Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), for any part of the transaction.^{9, 10}

States and local jurisdictions with fee exemptions include but are not limited to [Anchorage, AK](#); [Andover, MA](#); [California](#); [Chicago, IL](#); [Colorado](#); [Duluth, MN](#); [Edwardsville, IL](#); [Minneapolis, MN](#); [New York](#); [Santa Fe, NM](#); [Oregon](#); [Taos, NM](#); and [Washington](#).

References

1. Beyond Plastics. (2021). [The New Coal: Plastics and Climate Change](#).
2. Judith Enck & Jan Dell. (2022). [Plastic Recycling Doesn't Work and Will Never Work](#). *The Atlantic*.
3. Surfrider Foundation. (2022). [Plastic Campaign and Policy Resources](#).
4. Duke Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions. (2022). [Plastics Policy Inventory](#).
5. State of Colorado. (2021). [House Bill 21-1162](#). Governor signed into law July 6, 2021. Goes into effect July 1, 2024.
6. State of Oregon. (2019). [House Bill 2509](#). Enacted January 1, 2020.
7. State of New Jersey. (2020). [P.L. 2020, Chapter 117](#). Enacted May 4, 2022.
8. Angela Hessenius. (2020). [Implementing Equity Solutions and Promoting Environmental Justice Through Durham's Proposed Plastic Bag Fee](#). Page 7.
9. Village of Ridgewood. (2019). [Ordinance No. 3722](#). Enacted January 1, 2020.
10. Municipality of Anchorage. (2018). [AO No. 2018-63\(S\)](#). Enacted September 15, 2019.

Signed by:

Clean Water Action
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Center for Nature Informed Therapy
Creation Care Ministry of the
Delaware-Maryland Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(ELCA)
Eastern Region Association of Forest and
Nature Schools

Environment Maryland
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Ornithological Society
Maryland PIRG
National Aquarium
Oceana
Safe Skies Maryland
Waterkeepers Chesapeake

June 5, 2023

Testimony on Bill 25-23
General Provisions – Public Campaign Financing

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports Bill 25-23 which would establish a Public Campaign Financing Fund in Anne Arundel County.

Public campaign financing programs are important tools that lift the voices of regular Marylanders in the light of ever-increasing influence of wealthy interests on our politics. These programs work by incentivizing candidates to participate in a new system of fundraising, where large contributions and contributions from corporations and PACs are sworn off, while small-dollar donations from regular residents of Anne Arundel County are amplified so that even the smallest donation can have a huge impact. To qualify, candidates must receive a threshold number of contributions from a threshold number of contributors. This process ensures that only candidates with viable community support can gain access to the public funding program, thus protecting public money.

Montgomery County, Howard County, Prince George's County, Baltimore City, and Baltimore County have all established similar programs, with [Montgomery County successfully](#)¹ using its program for the first time in 2018. The results in Montgomery County were incredibly heartening. Incumbent and first-time candidates from a diverse array of backgrounds used the program to run for office, raising money by meeting with constituents instead of reaching out to a cadre of wealthy individuals, corporations, and political PACs.

These programs also have bipartisan support. Former Governor Larry Hogan successfully used a similar program, the Fair Campaign Financing Fund, the first time he was elected. We've also seen both Democrats and Republicans opting in and qualifying in both Howard and Montgomery County in previous election cycles. This is also the case in other states: In Arizona, candidates from both parties use their Citizens Clean Elections program [at almost equal rates](#).² Connecticut's program helps Republicans compete more effectively³ in a state that is heavily Democratic.

These programs remain popular amongst Marylanders for a simple reason: particularly since the *Citizens United* decision, they feel that our campaign system is disconnected from the populace, and that LLCs and wealthy individuals render regular Marylanders' voices meaningless in the current campaign finance environment. Last year's charter petition effort – raised after the Council's failure to pass a Charter resolution that would have established a program within the county - revealed that more than 5,000 Anne Arundel County citizens would have liked the chance to weigh in on introducing a campaign finance program in Anne Arundel County.

Ultimately, public campaign financing programs increase participation on both sides of the campaign – voters donate because they know that even a little bit can go a long way, and this donation is an investment that more tightly connects them to the campaign, raising interest. Candidates, freed from

having to dial-for-dollars with wealthy donors, spend more time among their constituents, getting a clearer picture of the problems facing regular Marylanders instead of just the wealthy few.

One of the most important aspects of public campaign financing programs is that, particularly when campaigns are getting vastly more expensive each cycle, they allow regular people to run on the power of their ideas instead of having to rely on wealthy interests.

A public campaign financing program in Anne Arundel County would allow residents with lower incomes a way to participate and have an impact on their elections that they are currently shut out from. Additionally, it would further incentivize candidates to reach out to the residents, as their small contributions could be matched for larger contributions, giving Anne Arundel's more marginalized residents a greater voice in the direction of the County.

Common Cause Maryland supports Bill 25-23 because it would lay the foundation for the creation of a public campaign financing program that could greatly amplify the voices of Anne Arundel County residents. We urge you to vote favorably on the legislation.

Morgan Drayton, Policy & Engagement Manager
Common Cause Maryland
Mdrayton@commoncause.org | 443-906-0442

Maryland PIRG

Emily Scarr, Maryland PIRG Director

Bill No. 25-23: AN ORDINANCE concerning: General Provisions – Public Campaign Financing

Position: Support

Monday, June 5, 2023

Maryland Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) is a non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organization with grassroots members in Anne Arundel County and throughout the state. 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 people.

Thank you for your continued work on Bill No. 25-23. You should have my previous testimony from the 5/15 hearing. I wanted to provide additional comment on potential amendments you may consider tonight. The bill is based on best practices from programs across the state, with adaptations for Anne Arundel County. **These programs are popular, effective, and bipartisan.**

We urge you to reject any further amendments to the bill that are opposed by the County Executive's team.

Limiting the program may make it less of a viable option for candidates interested in using the program, undermining the programs intent of limiting the influence of large donations, expanding opportunities to run for office, and elevating small donors from the County,

For example, **you should reject amendments to raise the qualifying thresholds for donors reached and money raised.** As written, they are challenging and appropriate. Raising them further could lead to a significant delay in when viable candidates receive matching funds they need to fully execute their campaigns, benefitting traditionally funded candidates.

Likewise, **lowering the limits for matching funds would hamstring both the program and the candidates interested in participating.** Our experience in Montgomery and Howard Counties has demonstrated that candidates only access the funds they need to remain competitive with non-participating candidates, so leaving them in place generally enables candidates in the most competitive races to run a viable campaign and those in less expensive races only use a portion of the funds. Lowering the threshold is penny wise and pound foolish as it undermines the intent of the program with limited financial benefit to the county.

As more communities and the state move towards establishing small donor public financing programs, there is value in the program models remaining largely similar. The policy, as written, is based on best practices, and we discourage straying from the design.

You have an incredible opportunity to empower Anne Arundel County residents in our elections and build a stronger democracy. Please support Bill No. 25-23.

I oppose Bill 25-23, Public Campaign Financing.

At a time of high inflation, increasing crime, and poor student test results, spending tax payer money to those running for office seems to be a frivolous use of public money. The bill does not even document the need for this legislation. As with other legislation presented this spring, the only justification seems to be that the other Counties have such a program, so we should have one too.

The Office of Budget estimates that this legislation will cost tax payers between 2 and 3 million dollars and could cost up to \$8 million. I maintain that this money would be better spent hiring Police, First Responders or Teachers, if spent at all.

Instead of spending between \$3 million and \$8 million on political candidates, we could:

- Fund between 60 and 160 jobs paying \$50,000 or
- Provide between 300 and 800 salary increases of \$10,000 to existing police, first responders, or teachers.

At the last hearing, the Administration and several witnesses stated that this bill would diversify the candidate pool, and remove the financial barriers for running. However, Larry Hogan and Marc Elrich were cited as proof that the system worked at the State level and in Montgomery County, respectively. I would not view either as particularly diverse or in a lower socio-economic class. Although Mr. Elrich used public money for his two successful campaigns to be the County Executive, Mr. Hogan did not seek public money for his re-election campaign for Governor. I believe he amassed quite a war chest for his re-election and future campaigns once he became an incumbent and did not want to be constrained by public financing.

Montgomery County conducted two local primaries using public financing. In 2018, 68 candidates ran, 40 filed for funding, and 23 qualified receiving \$5.25 million (about \$228,000 per person). In 2022, 62 candidates, ran, but only 29 files, and 20 qualified receiving \$3.46 million (about \$170,000

per person). Since this bill is modeled on the Montgomery County program, has anyone done an analysis to see why fewer people filed and for those who qualified, why public funding decreased.

Not one Republican in Montgomery County qualified for public funding. . Few could qualify as they were running unopposed in the primary. Of the two contested Republican races, only 1 of the 5 candidates filed, and he failed to gather sufficient donations to receive funding.

I am concerned that groups and organizations are barred from contributing per Section 1-12-109 on page 8, lines 28-34. I could understand limiting the amount that PACs, corporations, labor unions, and political party central committees could donate to \$250, but to completely bar them seems to be violating freedom of speech. Political clubs of both parties recruit candidates and make relatively small donations to help them get started. Under this bill, these actions would be prohibited.

Finally, I am concerned about the source of these small donations. How can the system prevent donations via identity theft. It seems possible that groups could obtain lists of county addresses and make donations in their name. A few months ago, people were interviewed in the Annapolis area about making multiple donations to candidates, and several denied having made any.

Please vote against this bill.