

## **Howard County Citizens Association supports CB 30-2017.**

I am testifying on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association. My name is Alan Schneider; 12598 Clarksville Pike, Clarksville, Md. I am an officer and a member of the Board of Directors.

HCCA supports CB 30-2017. Thank you for your vote in favor of Fair Elections. Thank you for putting public financing on the ballot for a vote-by supporting the majority of citizens who voted in favor of a Howard County Charter Amendment. Howard County citizens look forward to greater participation.

The Board discussed campaign financing concerns and the hoped for improvements.

CB 30 promotes a greater voice for citizens in the political decisions. The benefits of CB 30 include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **It promotes a level playing field.** The public needs candidates who will speak up to express views other than the views presented by special interests who direct their funding to candidates who will vote on issues financially beneficial to a few at the expense of the taxpaying general public. Consider also the growing number of senior citizens in Howard County are on limited incomes.
2. **Promotes Diversity.** A study by the non-partisan, privately funded Clean Elections Institute (which publicly supports Clean Elections) found that the number and geographic, economic, and ethnic diversity of campaign contributors increased significantly, with contributors almost quadrupling, contributions from people with incomes below \$40,000 increasing by 40% and contributions from Latinos increasing significantly.

In 2008, a study released by the non-partisan, non-profit organization Public Campaign, examined the demographic profile of \$5 qualifying contribution donors in Clean Elections gubernatorial campaigns in Arizona over the course of the 2002 and 2006 elections, comparing and contrasting them with contributions raised by candidates running with funding from private sources — more than 67,000 contributions in all. The data ~~were~~ **was** analyzed by zip code alongside U.S. Census data to determine the racial, ethnic, geographic, and economic characteristics of donors. The study, titled All Over The Map, found that Arizona's qualifying contribution donors are more diverse racially, ethnically, economically, and geographically than donors giving to candidates who choose to rely on private fundraising. In nearly every category, Clean Elections \$5 donors were more representative of the state's population than were donors to privately funded campaigns.

3. **Matching small contributions to qualified candidates will help balance the Supreme Court decision** in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission. The US Supreme Court ruled that the constitution does not prohibit campaign financing.

Justice Stevens wrote ""The Court's ruling threatens to undermine the integrity of elected institutions across the Nation. The path it has taken to reach its outcome will, I fear, do damage to this institution." In partial dissent, he wrote:

"The basic premise underlying the Court's ruling is its iteration, and constant reiteration, of the proposition that the First Amendment bars regulatory distinctions based on a speaker's identity, including its "identity" as a corporation. While that glittering generality has rhetorical appeal, it is not a correct statement of the law. Nor does it tell us when a corporation may engage in electioneering that some of its shareholders oppose. It does not even resolve the specific question whether Citizens United may be required to finance some of its messages

with the money in its PAC. The conceit that corporations must be treated identically to natural persons in the political sphere is not only inaccurate but also inadequate to justify the Court's disposition of this case.

"In the context of election to public office, the distinction between corporate and human speakers is significant. Although they make enormous contributions to our society, corporations are not actually members of it. They cannot vote or run for office. Because they may be managed and controlled by nonresidents, their interests may conflict in fundamental respects with the interests of eligible voters. The financial resources, legal structure, and instrumental orientation of corporations raise legitimate concerns about their role in the electoral process. Our lawmakers have a compelling constitutional basis, if not also a democratic duty, to take measures designed to guard against the potentially deleterious effects of corporate spending in local and national races.

4. **Promotes Gender Neutrality.** A study found that women were much more likely than men to accept public funding. **"Public Election Funding, Competition, and Candidate Gender"**.
5. **Campaign Finance Reform is a widespread movement at many levels for an improved Democratic election process.** Howard County citizens seek to be part of the process for election improvements.

CB 30 is a step in the right direction.

Thank you.