



***SAME BILL AND POSITION AS HOUSE BILL 731**

February 22, 2007

To: Chairman and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Henry Bogdan, Public Policy Director

Re: Senate Bill 546 – Election Law – Public Campaign Financing Act for Candidates for the General Assembly

Position: **Support**

The Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations is a statewide organization comprised of over 1600 member nonprofit agencies, associations and institutions, and our purpose is to support and enhance the effectiveness of the State's more than 22,000 nonprofit groups in carrying out their missions of public and community service.

We are also committed to promoting the nonprofit sector's involvement as advocates for the public policy interests of the citizens and communities we serve.

Nonprofit organizations typically evolve from individuals seeking to improve some aspect of life in their communities or need the needs of fellow citizens. Their effectiveness hinges on the credibility and trust that is crucial to their support by the public. The programs they provide, or the people for whom they are advocates, are also often dependent on the ability of government to work effectively, with sustained public support.

As an organization we believe that public trust and confidence in governmental institutions, and participation in our political process, is being threatened by growing skepticism and disenchantment with an electoral process that seems increasingly dominated by the need to fund-raise.

Senate Bill 546 offers an alternative mechanism through public financing of legislative campaigns, designed to reduce the advantages and incentives for excessive private fund-raising. Beyond the direct impact of this change on elections, it also offers the opportunity to improve public confidence in the institution and process of the General Assembly itself.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations supports Senate Bill 546, and we urge the adoption of a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.