



April 21, 2021

The Honorable Brandon Scott
Office of the Mayor
250 City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Mayor Scott,

We are a diverse group of good government, faith, environmental, and community organizations who have united together to support a new way to fund Baltimore elections. We are thrilled that you and the City Council created a Fair Elections Fund and program after voter authorization in 2018. We urge you to honor the legacy that you created by getting the program off to a strong financial start.

To do so, we encourage you to include an investment of \$2.5 million in the FY22 budget to the Fair Election Fund. You and the Council President should also move quickly to finalize the Fair Elections Commission, as outlined by the City Charter. Once you do, you will receive recommendations from the Commission for annual funding. In order to ensure the program is viable for 2024, it is critically important we finalize the commission and get the program started with a strong first installment of funding.

Thanks to your support as a Councilmember and Council President, Baltimore City took a huge step forward for Fair Elections by passing [Council Bill 19-0403](#). Large campaign contributions, which few Baltimore City residents can afford to make, have too much influence over who can run for office, what issues make it onto the agenda, and who wins. [And these big donors aren't reflective of Baltimore families](#) —they're wealthier, and they are also far less likely to be women or people of color, and they have starkly different priorities when it comes to public policies.

The role of large donors contributes to an already shrinking faith in government. But small donor public financing programs [have proven effective in Maryland](#) and in [DC](#) as a way to reduce the role of large donors and increase small donor participation.

The Fair Elections program will amplify the voices of Baltimore working families by encouraging small-dollar donations, and providing matching funds for candidates who abide by stricter ethics and transparency rules, like not taking giant checks from lobbyists, corporations, or PACs. By reducing the role of these large donors we can ensure everyone can have a voice in our elections, regardless of how much money they make.

We are very grateful for your support throughout the legislative process, and urge you to continue to lead Baltimore forward by getting this program off to a strong fiscal start in the FY 2022 budget.

Signed,

Rev. Kobi Little
President
Baltimore City NAACP

Rianna Lloyd
Communications Associate
Jews United for Justice

Jennifer Kunze
Maryland Program Manager
Clean Water Action

Nancy Lawyer
Co-President
League of Women Voters of Baltimore City

Joanne Antoine
Executive Director
Common Cause Maryland

Emily Scarr
Director
Maryland PIRG

Demos

Cristi Demnowicz
Chair
Represent Maryland

Charlie Cooper
President
Get Money Out Maryland

Charly Carter
Executive Director
StepUp Maryland