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**Testimony in Support of CB-4:  
Fair Election Fund**

TO: Councilmember Derrick Leon Davis, Chair, and members of the PSFM Committee  
FROM: Jennifer Dwyer, Policy and Legislative Director  
DATE: June 7th, 2018  
POSITION: Support

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on CB-4. Progressive Maryland is a grassroots, nonprofit organization with approximately 16,000 members and supporters in Prince George's County. In addition, there are dozens affiliated community, faith, and labor organizations both in the county and across the state that stand behind our work. Our mission is to improve the lives of working families in Maryland. Please note our strong support for this bill.

Fundraising is often one of the most difficult and least enjoyable tasks of an elected official's campaign. CB-4 provides an additional, opt-in path for candidates running for County Executive or County Council to raise the funds required to run for office by establishing a small donor campaign finance program. By turning ordinary residents into major donors to a campaign, CB-4 benefits candidates by allowing them the freedom to focus on serving and interacting with residents throughout their campaign and after their election without feeling forced to split their time between traditional fundraising and earning votes.

Consequently, the program benefits everyday Prince Georgians by providing them with more time to engage one-on-one with and be heard by the candidates who will ultimately represent them in the county's highest offices, and empowering them to make significant contributions to their favorite candidates and help them get elected. As others will testify to today, Montgomery County's Fair Elections program has proven popular with residents, and is in use by a number of incumbents who formerly fundraised in the traditional manner.

For the low cost of approximately \$1.50 per resident per year, or .04% of the county's annual budget, residents will see their \$10, \$25, or \$50 donations become \$80, \$200, or \$350 for their preferred candidate. The largest donations allowed, \$150, become \$725 for the candidate. Making it easier to accumulate donations of this size will free up considerable time for candidates and elected officials to serve the people of Prince George's County. Just as we pay for poll workers and voting machines, this is a critical investment in the health of our democracy.

Progressive Maryland believes that public funding is a win-win for voters and for candidates.