

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 20

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2000 Regular Session
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By: **Delegates Hurson, Taylor, Kittleman, Bobo, Glassman, DeCarlo,
Mandel, Bronrott, McIntosh, Benson, Dypski, Grosfeld, Clagett, Riley,
Snodgrass, McKee, Shank, and Donoghue**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2000
Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Election Law - Study Commission on Maryland Campaign Finance Laws**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a Study Commission on Maryland Campaign Finance
4 Laws; specifying the composition, powers, and duties of the Commission;
5 providing for the staffing of the Commission; requiring the Commission to
6 report its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislative
7 changes, to the Governor and the General Assembly by a certain date; providing
8 for the termination of the Commission; and generally relating to the Study
9 Commission on Maryland Campaign Finance Laws.

10 WHEREAS, As the cost of an election campaign escalates, candidates and other
11 persons involved in the political process appear at times to be engaged in
12 near-continuous campaign fundraising; and

13 WHEREAS, Both in Maryland and across the country, it is feared that the cost
14 of election campaigns may discourage potential candidates and present a serious
15 obstacle to efforts to attract a wide and diverse field of candidates for elective office,
16 including many minorities; and

17 WHEREAS, Concerns sometimes are expressed about the perceived impact and
18 link between campaign contributions and the executive and legislative decision
19 making processes; and

20 WHEREAS, The people of Maryland ought to be assured that the State's
21 campaign finance laws are structured in a way that enhances public confidence and
22 trust in the executive and legislative decision making process and that those decision
23 making processes are not subject to improper and undue influence because of
24 campaign contributions; and

25 WHEREAS, The time now seems ripe for the General Assembly to take a fresh
26 look at the issue of campaign finance regulation and assess whether additional
27 modifications to the campaign finance laws are in order; now, therefore, be it

28 **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:**

1 (a) There is a Study Commission on Maryland Campaign Finance Laws.

2 (b) The Commission shall consist of the following 17 members:

3 (1) Four individuals appointed by the President of the Senate, at least
4 one of whom shall represent the minority party in the Senate, including:

5 (i) At least two members of the Senate of Maryland; and

6 (ii) If necessary to fill the four appointments allowed to the
7 President under this paragraph, one or two additional individuals;

8 (2) Four individuals appointed by the Speaker of the House, at least one
9 of whom shall represent the minority party in the House, including:

10 (i) At least two members of the House of Delegates; and

11 (ii) If necessary to fill the four appointments allowed to the Speaker
12 under this paragraph, one or two additional individuals; and

13 (3) Nine individuals appointed by the Governor, at least three of whom
14 shall be members of a political party other than that of the Governor, including:

15 (i) A member of the State Board of Elections;

16 (ii) A member of the State Ethics Commission;

17 (iii) A regulated lobbyist; and

18 (iv) Six additional individuals.

19 (c) The chairman of the Commission shall be designated by the Governor.

20 (d) The Department of Legislative Services and the State Board of Elections
21 shall provide staff for the Commission.

22 (e) The Commission shall:

23 (1) Examine the State election code as it relates to campaign financing;

24 (2) Collect information about campaign financing practices and
25 standards for other jurisdictions;

26 (3) Examine the cost and practicality of implementing a system of public
27 financing of statewide and legislative election campaigns in Maryland;

28 (4) Consider issues related to campaign contributions, including:

29 (i) The types of individuals, corporations, political action
30 committees ("PACs"), unions, and other persons who make campaign contributions for
31 elections in Maryland;

- 1 (ii) The role played by PACs in election campaigns in Maryland;
- 2 (iii) The adequacy of limits on contributions or transfers that may
3 be made by individuals, PACs, or other persons during an election cycle;
- 4 (iv) Examine the effectiveness of current disclosure requirements in
5 Maryland and in other states in providing detailed and accessible information to the
6 public regarding beneficiaries and expenditures by candidates, candidate slates,
7 campaign committees, and political action committees;
- 8 (v) The role and prevalence of "issue ads" and other independent
9 expenditures under the current Maryland campaign finance laws; and
- 10 (vi) An assessment of the implementation by the State Board of
11 Elections of a system of electronic filing for campaign contributions that facilitates
12 full and timely disclosure of campaign contributions;
- 13 (5) Receive testimony, as the Commission considers appropriate; and
- 14 (6) Report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
15 statutory changes to the Maryland campaign finance laws for consideration by the
16 General Assembly in the 2003 Session, to the Governor, and subject to § 2-1246 of the
17 State Government Article, to the General Assembly not later than December 31, 2002.
- 18 (f) The Commission shall terminate its existence after June 30, 2003; and be
19 it further

20 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
21 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
22 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
23 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.