

**March 3, 2020****Testimony on HB 1246  
Presidential Candidate Tax Transparency Act  
Ways and Means****Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 1246 which would require that Presidential Candidates disclose their tax returns in order to appear on Maryland's ballot.

The practice of Presidential candidates disclosing their tax returns goes back decades to President Nixon, who released them after he won the presidency. Subsequently, members of each party have voluntarily released their tax returns during the election cycle, providing transparency into their finances, potential conflicts, and debts. This transparency has been vital to ensuring that Presidents are above reproach when it comes to undue influence and possible misuse of office for monetary gain.

HB 1246 is unfortunately necessary because Donald Trump, 45th President of the United States, has defied this precedent and left voters in the dark. This lack of disclosure on the President's part has helped to fuel various accusations of undue influence by Russia and corrupt dealings on the part of the President – increasing partisan division, and distracting from the democratic dialogue. HB 662 is additionally necessary because it is apparent that the current Congress has little interest in rectifying the actions of the President, which are unprecedented in the modern era.

HB 1246 would help to force the disclosure of information that is vitally necessary to the public. For that reason, we recommend a favorable report.