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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE  
IN SUPPORT OF  
HB 1249 – STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND LOCAL BOARDS OF  
ELECTIONS –MEMBERSHIP AND STAFF**

March 2, 2021

Get Money Out (GMOM) is an all-volunteer organization established eight years ago. We want all citizens to have equal access to the ballot and an equal say in governance. Through our grassroots actions, we have signed up over 9,000 supporters.

A key goal of GMOM is to make access to the ballot equal for everyone – both in their roles as candidates and as voters. Historically in the United States, there have been attempts to suppress the votes of racial minorities, and Maryland is almost 30% African American and only slightly more than 50% White, non-Hispanic. We believe that the creation of a Racial Equity Coordinator with the duties defined in **HB 1249** would be a prudent step toward achieving this goal in Maryland.

One concern we have is that racial minorities in Maryland live disproportionately in jurisdictions with lower wealth. This may impact the ability of the local jurisdiction to fully equip, supply, and staff the election apparatus. In last June’s primary election, the *Baltimore Sun* reported, “Hours after polls in the primary election were due to close, lines remained at voting centers across the city including Edmondson High School and Cross Country Elementary/Middle School, where voters since late afternoon had endured waits of more than an hour.” We have wondered whether the funding of local boards of election may impact these incidents of excessive waiting to vote.

The establishment of the office of Racial Equity Coordinator would provide resources to answer questions like this. We ask for your favorable report on **HB 1249**.