

## 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

As the Maryland General Assembly continues to navigate the ongoing public health crisis, we'll be working to ensure the public can observe and meaningfully participate in both chambers during the 90-day legislative session. We'll also be advocating for reforms aimed at building a more inclusive democracy.

### Access to Voting

The right to vote is a fundamental tenet of our democracy. CCMD works year-round to protect, expand and guarantee the right to vote to make sure that every eligible Marylander can have their voice heard by election day. This session, we focus our advocacy on emergency reforms needed for the 2022 elections.

**Mail-In Voting** – In 2021, we passed reforms that strengthened our mail-in voting process. Eligible voters can now opt to permanently vote by mail using improved materials. They also now have the option to return their voted ballot using secure and accessible drop boxes in all future elections. This session, we'll be working to ensure our state and local Boards of Election are ready to meet the demands of the increased interest in our mail-in voting system to ensure that voters are confident in the process. Our priorities include advocating for improved ballot tracking, a clear process for "curing," and allowing for the pre-processing of mail ballots.

**Better Pay for Election Judges & Protections for Election Workers** – Each election cycle, our local Boards of Election experience issues recruiting and retaining an adequate number of trained Election Judges. Daily pay rates also vary all throughout the state, making it difficult for residents to justify missing work when their county pays inadequately. We'll be advocating for improved pay which will help expand the pool of Election Judges in Maryland. We also plan to support efforts to protect election workers against harassment and intimidation.

**Expand the Vote** – In 2021, we worked with the Expand the Vote coalition to secure access to voting for eligible incarcerated Marylanders. This session, we'll be working to ensure the process is accessible and secure, ensuring those voting inside a correctional facility can vote and have their voted counted.

### Redistricting

The Maryland General Assembly has adopted a new congressional map and will now redraw the boundaries of our legislative voting districts. We need to ensure the lines drawn are fair and center input from Maryland communities.

**Legislative Map** – The Maryland General Assembly approved a Congressional map during the 2021 special session. They will now consider legislative map proposals submitted by both the Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission (LRAC) and the Citizens Redistricting Commission (MCRRC). We will be working to ensure the map is in compliance with the Voting Rights Act, considers communities of interest, and centers public input. We'll also be working to process is transparent and that changes being made to the map are being disclosed in a timely manner with ample time for public review and input

### Transparency and Accountability

Open and transparent government is critical for an accountable democracy. We continue in our role as a watchdog and resource on the issue.

**Virtual Court Access** – Virtual court access ensures that the public has safe, affordable, and meaningful opportunities to observe their legal system at work. With greater public access to court comes greater accountability. This session, we'll be working with Courtwatch PG to ensure the virtual access authorized by the Court of Appeals in 2021 in response to the ongoing public health crisis remains permanent. Virtual court access would in no way replace in-person legal proceedings themselves but will address many of the issues with coming to court. Volunteers and others can be present to support defendants, victims, and witnesses in their proceedings.

**Public Information Act** – The Maryland Public Information Act (PIA) ensures public oversight of our state, county, and local governments. It allows Marylanders greater transparency into the workings of our officials, gives us access to data collected with public dollars, and helps ensure a level of transparency vital to a healthy democracy. In order for the PIA to be an effective check on the government, it is crucial public records be maintained. This session, we'll be working to ensure communications sent by public officials using texting apps and similar digital platforms that provide the option to automatically destroy messages within a specific amount of time are permanently archived.

### Campaign Finance

With support for small donor public financing programs continuing to grow throughout the state, we are mobilizing Marylanders to help put pressure on our Legislature to begin reforming its own campaigns.

**Public Financing for the General Assembly** – Citizen-funded elections help break down barriers to participating in our democracy, creating a government that looks more like us and works better for us. With programs like these in place, policies and laws are more responsive to public needs and less skewed by wealthy special interests. This session, we'll be working with the Fair Elections Maryland coalition to establish a program for legislative candidates.

**Disclosure & Transparency** – The need for heightened transparency has never been more urgent. We'll be working to protect and strengthen our political spending disclosure laws so that every Marylander knows who is trying to influence our votes and can see who is funding those efforts.

### Other Initiatives

**Avert a Constitutional Crisis** – Special interests continue to advance calls for Constitutional Conventions in the states. We will continue to fight Constitutional Convention calls on every issue.

