



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Frank Lubsey  
(301) 850-4589**

**Maryland Delegate Gerron Levi Introduces Bill to Close Loophole in  
Campaign Finance Reporting Laws**

**(Annapolis, MD – February 18, 2010)** -- **Delegate Gerron Levi**, along with 14 other House members, introduced a bill today closing a loophole in the campaign finance reporting laws that allows political candidates to hide their donor list when they receive lump-sum contributions through a new candidate slate account. The measure, HB 1383, would prohibit new candidate slate accounts from transferring large sums of money to benefit a candidate without first revealing how the money was raised.

“Quite simply, if large sums of money are flowing to candidates for public office, then the transaction should be completely transparent,” said Levi, a Democratic candidate for Prince George’s County Executive. “Candidates should not be able to hide the source of the large amounts of money on campaign reports simply by filtering it through a new slate account. The purpose of the campaign finance disclosure laws is to reveal the source of money in campaigns, period. Who’s giving it, to whom, how much and why.”

The idea for the bill comes as a result of the January campaign finance reporting of Prince George’s County Executive Candidate Rushern Baker. Baker received a \$206,000 transfer from a new slate set up on January 5<sup>th</sup> called County 1 Now. The slate raised \$206,000 in eight days and transferred it all to the Baker campaign on January 13.

“The slatemakers set it up in such a way as to get around the requirement to reveal the source of the money,” Levi added. “It was a slick slight-of-the-hand maneuver and, quite frankly, I think it will come back to haunt anyone associated with it. Prince George’s voters want real change in this election...change that is not tainted by questionable campaign fundraising tactics.”

Because Baker’s County 1 Now slate was set up two days after the Maryland Board of Elections sent out mandatory notices alerting all campaign accounts that their reports were due, the slate does not have to reveal how and from whom the money was raised until August. According to the Board of Elections, candidates who wait until after the September 14<sup>th</sup> primary to file their campaign finance reports would face a penalty of \$10 per day with a maximum penalty of \$250.

“I do not think it is unreasonable to expect that another slate will be formed just prior to election day that will pour in hundreds of thousands more, without anyone knowing where it came from until after the race is over,” Levi said.

For more information about HB 1383, visit <http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/billfile/hb1383.htm>

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