

March 12th, 2020

HB-0867 State Designations – State Tartan – SUPPORT

House Health and Government Operations Committee

Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair

Chair Pendergrass and members of the committee,

My name is Paul Wiedorn. I am a resident of Legislative district 33 in Anne Arundel County.

In the summer of 1974, I came to Maryland with the great Naval Academy class of 1978. My last two years before retiring from the navy I taught Naval Architecture at USNA. After I retired, I stayed in Maryland to teach technology education in public high schools and to raise my family.

About 20 years ago, I began experimenting with a plaid pattern (tartan) based on the best state flag in the nation. On occasion, I would pick up the design and try to improve it by changing the amount of white, the number or thickness of the stripes, or by making it a repeating pattern. Turns out the first design was the best. At the time, you could only register your design with one of three private registries, none of them official, and under any named you liked. However, you had to have a full bolt (300 yards) of the cloth woven, something that I was not ready to do.

In February of 2009, the Scottish Parliament launched the Scottish Register of Tartans, the procedure for registering a tartan was formalized, and restrictions on naming were put into place. A design could be registered without cloth having been woven, but to call a tartan “Maryland State” would require the approval from a prominent office-bearer in the appropriate body.

In 2013, I registered the design with US copyright office and will be transferring this copyright to the state of Maryland when the bill is passed (or sooner).

In researching state tartans, I found that 34 states have a tartan as an official state symbol, most of these by statute, but that Maryland didn’t, a problem that I thought I should solve. The answer to some questions that you may have about tartans is an enclosure to this testimony.

I am a technology and engineering education teacher, not a tartan designer. I have engaged in this endeavor for only altruistic reasons. The thing that fascinates me about this design is that you don’t have to be a tartan spotter to recognize the tartan as “Maryland.” My proposed “Maryland State” tartan had been recognized as being Maryland by everyone from the Governor to the building security guard to the waiter in a restaurant.

I would be truly honored if you would accept my design as an official state symbol for the state that I love.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely yours,

Paul Wiedorn