

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



James R. Guy, President
Eric Colvin, Commissioner
Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner
Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner
John E. O'Connor, Commissioner

House Bill 655

Local Elections - County Commissioner and County Boards of Education - District Voting

OPPOSE

March 16, 2021

Senator Paul G. Pinsky, *Chair*
Maryland Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **HB 655** - Local Elections – County Commissioner and County Boards of Education –
District Voting - Hearing Date: March 18, 2021

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County, in concert with the Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County, **OPPOSE** HB 655 - Local Elections – County Commissioner and County Boards of Education – District Voting - as amended, which is being heard on March 18, 2021 in the Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee. This legislation, as drafted, sets an unreasonable expectation for a change like this to be forced on any county without community input and feedback.

The Commissioners of the three Southern Maryland Counties, St. Mary's County, Calvert County and Charles County met with the Southern Maryland Delegation on Friday, March 12, 2021 to discuss HB 655 as amended. After much discussion, St. Mary's County and Calvert Counties feel that a voter referendum to decide how voting should be conducted in their respective counties should be put forth to the voters in an open and transparent manner in the 2022 election.

The Commissioners of St. Mary's County and Calvert County request the following amendment that would allow this bill, upon passage, to go to a voter referendum for the people of St. Mary's County and Calvert County to decide and vote on in the 2022 election:

- Content of HB 655 –County Commissioner and County Boards of Education - District Voting (plurality voting)

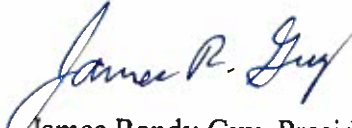
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Senator Paul G. Pinsky, *Chair*


March 16, 2021

We OPPOSE HB 655 as amended and believe this legislation would not benefit the citizens of St. Mary's County and Calvert County nor would it serve their best interest. We, as two Southern Maryland counties most impacted, request consideration of this amendment which would allow the citizens of St. Mary's County and Calvert County to make the decision. It is our goal for our citizens be heard and be part of an open and transparent process by allowing them to make these decisions at the local level. It is our hope that local courtesy would be respected.

Sincerely,
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY


James Randy Guy, President

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND


Earl F. Hance, President

CSMC/AB/sf
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Cc: President of Senate, Bill Ferguson
Senator Arthur Ellis
Senator Michael Jackson
Senator Jack Bailey
Delegate Matthew Morgan
Delegate Gerald Clark
Delegate Brian Crosby
Commissioner Eric Colvin
Commissioner Michael Hewitt
Commissioner Todd Morgan
Commissioner John O'Connor
Dr. Rebecca Bridgett, County Administrator
David Weiskopf, County Attorney