

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

COMMISSIONERS OF  
ST. MARY'S COUNTY

*Eric Colvin*



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February 4, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chairman  
House Ways and Means Committee  
Room 131, House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 655 - Local Government – County Commissioner Elections – District Voting  
Hearing: February 9, 2021

Dear Chairman Kaiser and the members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

When I was first elected as a County Commissioner, I made a vow to myself that I would never base my decisions on political expediency or reelection desires. I try to approach every decision with the mindset of what is fair, equitable, and best for my county. With that in mind, I am submitting this written testimony in opposition of Delegate Crosby's bill 655 that would change the way that county commissioners are elected.

I want to preface all of my comments by making it clear that Delegate Crosby and I are friends, we have worked together, and we represent some of the same citizens through our respective positions. However, we do not agree on this topic. This bill would result in a fundamental change in how we work as County Commissioners. Currently, Commissioners in St. Mary's County are elected by the entire county with the requirement of living in particular districts. This ensures that there is a diverse geographical representation but also ensures that every Commissioner is required to consider the needs of the entire county as a whole.

My concern with Delegate Crosby's proposal is that it could negatively impact districts represented by the party that is not in the majority in the county. This bill would turn the Commissioner job into a mentality of "What can I bring home to my district?" Delegate Crosby has advocated for this bill by pointing out that this is how state and federal representatives operate, and therefore it would be good for the county. I would argue the opposite. He frequently touts all of the accomplishments that he brings home to his constituents but, as Commissioners, we need to think about the overall good for the entire county, not just one area—and I would argue that the county is a small enough region that this method works!

My fear and concern is that this proposal will fragment and harm local governance. Delegate Crosby has argued that areas of his district do not receive adequate resources or representation at the local level—this is false. The area he speaks of has more parks than any other region of the

county, the only county-owned and operated swimming pool, county-run gymnastics center, sprayground, skate park, one of the three libraries in the county, and multiple other ongoing projects and resources. The argument I would make is that because we are elected to represent the county as a whole, we are able to provide resources exactly where they are needed and not solely based on the concept of "bringing home the bacon" to our districts. The change that Delegate Crosby has proposed could result in fewer resources going to his own district's citizens.

Thank you all for the work that you do and for receiving this testimony on the bill. I wish you continued success and ask that you do not hesitate to reach back if there is any additional information that I can provide to help your decision-making.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Colvin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric Colvin  
eric.colvin@stmarysmd.com  
County Commissioner, District 1  
St. Mary's County