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Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD 21401

**Testimony in Opposition for HB0562 with Recommended Amendments - Baltimore County  
- Political Party Central Committee - Elections**

Hearing Date: March 27th, 2025

Chairperson and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am a resident of Legislative District 8 in Maryland. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB0562, a bill that seeks to modify the number of members elected to political party central committees in Baltimore County. While I recognize the importance of ensuring that these committees' function effectively and represent their communities fairly, I must oppose HB0562 in its current form due to a lack of transparency regarding the rationale for these proposed changes.

HB0562 significantly alters the number of representatives in different districts, yet it does not provide sufficient explanation as to how these changes were determined. Without clear justification, such as population data and political trends, this bill risks creating unnecessary confusion, diminishing public trust, and potentially skewing representation in ways that could favor certain political factions over others.

**Concerns Regarding HB0562**

**1. Lack of Transparency in District Adjustments**

- The bill does not offer a detailed explanation of why specific districts are gaining or losing seats. Such adjustments should be based on **verifiable population shifts, voting trends, and demographic changes** rather than arbitrary decisions.

**2. Potential for Reduced Political Participation**

- Reducing the number of available seats on these committees may limit opportunities for grassroots involvement, discouraging diverse voices, including **young leaders, women, and minority communities**, from participating in local party governance.

**3. Risk of Political Manipulation**

- Without clear criteria for restructuring the committees, there is a concern that the changes could disproportionately benefit specific political factions, undermining fair representation.

### **Recommended Amendments**

To improve the fairness and transparency of this proposal, I respectfully recommend the following amendments:

#### **1. Require Public Justification for District Changes**

- Before any alterations to central committee membership are made, there should be a **public report** explaining the changes. This report should include:
  - **Population data** from recent census counts or official estimates.
  - **Voting patterns and political trends** justify seat redistribution.
  - An opportunity for public feedback to ensure that affected communities have a say in the decision-making process.

#### **2. Ensure Representation for Historically Underrepresented Groups**

- Any adjustments should **not disproportionately reduce** representation for marginalized or growing communities. Specific measures should be taken to protect their involvement in local party leadership.

#### **3. Implement a Review and Oversight Mechanism**

- Establish a bipartisan oversight committee to assess the impact of these changes **after two election cycles** to determine if they have positively or negatively affected political participation and representation.

While HB0562 may aim to enhance the efficiency of political party central committees, its lack of transparency and potential consequences for representation make it difficult to support in its current form. A more thorough, data-driven approach is needed to ensure that any changes are fair, justifiable, and beneficial to all communities in Baltimore County. I urge the committee to adopt the recommended amendments to improve the bill's integrity and public trust.

I respectfully request an unfavorable report on HB0562 unless these transparency and accountability concerns are addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen Wambui