

Greg Wims  
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To the Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee – **VOTE YES for HB0181- General Provisions - State Song - Advisory Panel**

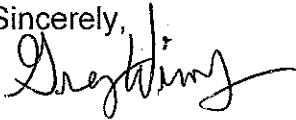
I am writing to you as a proud African American whose family has lived in Montgomery County for many generations, and as the past President of the Maryland State NAACP, to urge you to vote to approve HB0181- General Provisions - State Song - Advisory Panel that will be heard by your Committee on March 12.

As you know, the lyrics to Maryland's current State song - "Maryland! My Maryland!" - were written to protest Union Troops in Baltimore and is sung to the tune of "O, Christmas Tree." Southern Confederate soldiers used this song as a Civil War battle hymn. Maryland did not adopt "Maryland! My Maryland!" as our State song until 1939 – a time when Maryland was, shamefully, among our nation's segregated "Jim Crow" states.

***All Marylanders need a State song of which they can be proud.*** No one in my extended family should have to hear or sing a State song that glorifies our Confederate past. Virginia retired its racist state song, "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny," in 1997. What has prevented Maryland from also doing the right thing for so long? Once again your Committee has the chance to correct the wrongs of the past by approving HB0181 and creating an Advisory Panel that will find a State song that represents all Marylanders.

I hope to learn of your support for the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,



Greg Wims  
Past President, Maryland NAACP



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

**House Bill 0181 - General Provisions - State Song - Advisory Panel  
Health and Government Operations Committee - March 12, 2020  
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2020 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our County with more than 600 politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of HB0181 – General Provisions - State Song - Advisory Panel. This bill establishes a State Song Advisory Panel to review public submissions and suggestions for a new State song, and make recommendations to the Governor by December 1, 2020. The Panel will consist of two State Senators, two State Delegates, the State Archivist, the President of the State Historical Society and five residents of the State, appointed by the Governor. The Advisory Panel will hold at least three public hearings, and recommend new lyrics and a melody based on public submissions.

The lyrics to Maryland's current State song - "Maryland! My Maryland!" - were written to protest Union Troops in Baltimore and is sung to the tune of "O, Christmas Tree." Southern Confederate soldiers used this song as a Civil War battle hymn. Maryland did not adopt "Maryland! My Maryland!" as our State song until 1939 – a time when Maryland was, shamefully, among our nation's segregated "Jim Crow" states.

While remembering our history is important, it is equally important to correct the wrongs of the past. No Marylander should have to sing, or listen to, a State song that praises the forces that fought to preserve slavery. Virginia retired its racist state song, "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny," in 1997. It is more than time for Maryland to take action. A new State song will convey an important message – "All are welcome in today's Maryland."

**We ask for your support for HB0181 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.**

Respectfully,

Diana Conway  
President