

JASON C. BUCKEL
Legislative District 1B
Allegany County

CHIEF DEPUTY MINORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

Subcommittees
Finance Resources
Revenues

Chair
Allegany County House Delegation



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 309
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3404 · 301-858-3404
800-492-7122 Ext. 3404
Fax 410-841-3484 · 301-858-3484
Jason.Buckel@house.state.md.us

District Office
206 Washington Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
Fax 301-722-0334

March 2, 2020

HB 958 - Legislative Districts - Single-Member Delegate Districts

(One Person One Vote Act)

Dear Chairwoman Healey & Committee Members:

In 1964, the United States Supreme Court said very plainly and very clearly that state legislative districts must be substantially equal in population in a case called *Reynolds vs. Sims*. When that decision was made in the 1960s, roughly half of all states had multi-member districts.

Since that pronouncement was made in 1964, almost all other states in America have gotten rid of this approach. Sitting here today we are only one of ten states that allows you to have multi-member districts for your House of Delegates, House of Representatives, as it's known in other districts, your lower branch legislature. One of those states, our neighboring West Virginia, will be going away from this process after they redistrict following the 2020 census. They have eliminated or will be eliminating their process or procedure whereby they have multi-member districts.

I believe that this is a fundamental question of equality and fairness, I can't think of anything that seems more unfair. I had the pleasure to serve on the Redistricting Reform Commission that Mr. Olsen and Judge Williams chaired a few years ago and this is one of the factors that you will deal with issues of reapportionment and how you deal with gerrymander and how you create a non-partisan commission, but this is just very basic.

Each citizen in Maryland should and must have an equal voice in the General Assembly and in the House of Delegates. Under our current system, allowing multi member and single member districts at the political whims of the legislature and executive, this is simply not the case.

I would ask for a favorable report on HB 958.