



CONVENTION *of* STATES ACTION

MARYLAND

March 2, 2020

Ce Harrison
Legislative Liaison
958 Bay Front Avenue
North Beach, Maryland 20174

Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
Maryland House of Delegates

Dear Madam Chairman,

I am Ce Harrison, Legislative Liaison for the Maryland Convention of States and the daughter of an Army Officer Mother and a Navy Officer Father, both who were long serving World War II veterans that now lay in peace together in Arlington Cemetery. I was raised to trust and respect public servants, members of the military, and my government. I was born in DC, while my father was stationed at the Navy Yard and the Pentagon, and I have lived in Montgomery County, PG County, Calvert and Talbot Counties, and I now live in Anne Arundel County.

I am here today to highlight a huge concern of mine that this resolution can help fix. It is the disparity in the way that Maryland disproportionately taxes and seeks to further tax, its low and fixed income residents, often minorities. I believe this is directly related to out of control spending at the Federal level that is completely destroying the ability in Maryland to correctly tax and serve its residents. In passing HJ0011, this Committee will not only demonstrate to its constituents that it firmly believes in the rights of fair taxation and representation, but that it is also willing to step up to the plate, and be the first Blue state in the Country to declare that the power of the purse strings belongs back in the hands of the States, with State legislators having the appropriate resources they need to take care of their constituents. For Maryland, this could be the means to keep our schools, our roads, our bridges, the Bay and the surrounding environment, healthy and safe without unduly taxing those who can least afford to pay those amounts at a higher percentage rate than those who can.

Right now, you in Annapolis are forced to legislate with a very small portion of the money I actually send to the Comptroller a year - and the rest goes to DC and never comes back with our interests top of mind. Maryland never has enough funding to accomplish the things it needs to accomplish, and so we continue to see all manner of taxes imposed or raised, not much more in actual income taxes, a very unpopular thing with the electorate, but instead with the little things, like personal services that we use every day. These are not gauged on earnings but usage. I think this an appalling way to treat the elderly and the low income and minority residents of this State. Taxes should be flat or based on income, and legislators in Maryland are constantly looking for ways to raise money because of Federal government overreach. I also think that these policies will only succeed in driving small businesses away to more tax friendly states, and this is not what we want here in Maryland. I believe the Convention of States is the only way that the Federal government will be forced to look at its spending and overreach in all the states.



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I humbly ask that you consider these points when you think about your role in Maryland. We put you in office to protect all of Maryland's residents and not just those that can afford to live here and pay taxes. I want elected officials in Annapolis to determine how 100% of my Maryland tax dollars are spent based on how we vote for them to be spent. It's a Maryland issue not a DC issue. The resolution before you addresses fiscal spending and discussions about government overreach to be managed by Maryland. I ask for your serious consideration of the large support we have demonstrated for this movement with over 70 supporters for this hearing.

In my daily work, I am part of that lobbying machine in DC that never sees a line item they want to cut. Special interests control the narrative and the budget. There are over 40,000 lobbyists in Washington DC, each with their own agenda and line item for spending. The Convention of States Resolution allows for a representative from Maryland to discuss matters of federal fiscal spending that clearly our Federal government is not willing to take on to help keep more of our tax dollars in Maryland.

One last item I would like to note, I would like you to know, is that while I believe the approach of the multiple subject matters that this Resolution covers is novel and advantageous to State legislators, the primary interest of mine in the Convention of States was first and foremost, the term limit aspect of the Resolution. I have a son who has always been interested in politics. In fact, while he was earning his Eagle Scout many years ago in Anne Arundel County, he interned for two sessions here in the House of Delegates. After majoring in Political Science in college, he decided that politics holds no future for him. Without term limits, there is effectively no way he will ever be able to, at least any time soon, run for office at the Federal level. This is very frustrating to me. Federal politicians claim they care most about our youth but they have no problem effectively passing them by; having held out on a generation of millennials as they hold onto their jobs in DC. I believe it is disingenuous and not exactly brave to deny generations of children the possibility to have a hand in their Federal government.

Thank you all on this Committee for your devoted service to Maryland and for your time listening to us today. I especially would like to thank Delegate Mark Fisher for all of the time and energy he has put into supporting this, the largest growing grassroots movement in the country with almost 2,000,000 supporters. In Maryland, we have 17,760 supporters, having added close to 1,000 supporters and volunteers in the last 3 months.

Please pass this Resolution so we can put you in control of our spending and representation, rather than continuing to look to the Federal government for control of our Maryland tax dollars. Please vote in favor of HJ0011 to help bring back complete control of Maryland budgets and taxes and restrain the Federal government from spending our Maryland tax dollars without our consent.

Sincerely, Ce Harrison