

Good Afternoon Honorable Delegates of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Jay Guan. I live in Clarksburg, Montgomery County, with my wife and four year old son. In my spare time, I volunteered for an organization named Chinese American Parent Association of Montgomery County (CAPA-MC). This organization is composed entirely of volunteers, and it serves and advocates for immigrant parents in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS).

School boundary studies and redistricting are inherently a complex affair due to its impacts on the lives of many. Will my kids be switching schools twice in five years? What happens if one kid is here and the other over there? Who's picking up whom? This may sound mundane, but it's a reality that many families face everyday. It is unsurprising that school redistricting is understandably a cause for heartburns for many families. Thus, the transparency and inclusiveness of the boundary study process is of utmost importance and interest to all Marylanders.

The redistricting in Howard County, coupled with my recent experience with the Upcounty boundary study and Clarksburg #2 Elementary boundary study in MCPS serves as cautionary tales and illustrates the need for a transparent and inclusive process, and by extension the need for HB1422. In previous MCPS boundary studies such as the Clarksburg Elementary School #2 in 2018, the MCPS formed an advisory group comprised of PTAs and minority stakeholder groups. It enabled minority groups who are not usually active in this process to have a voice (e.g. Asian Americans). In the later Upcounty Boundary Study in 2019, a new process was implemented. Its focus was direct community engagement. Over the course of this boundary study, MCPS did not seem to do targeted outreach, or any other notable outreach to the Asian American communities that I know of, despite the fact that some sections within the boundary study area have significant Asian American population. As a volunteer for CAPA-MC, I had to relay information to Asian immigrant families within the boundary study area, get them to fill out surveys, and to attend public hearings. At the end, positions from the NAACP and the Hispanic advocacy groups were included in the Superintendent' Recommendation to the Board of Education, glaringly missing is the position from Asian American advocacy groups.

Having been involved in multiple boundary studies with various processes, I say that an advisory committee, representative of the families in the boundary study areas is essential, for the following reasons:

1. A representative and inclusive advisory committee enables more collaborative decision making. It allows different viewpoints to be exchanged and consensus be formed.
  - a. Public meetings and engagement are great for dissemination of information.  
However,
2. A representative and inclusive advisory committee brings the voice of hard-to-reach communities (i.e. immigrant and/or low income communities) to the table. Advisory

committee members from these hard-to-reach communities can also lend expertise on how to best do outreach to aforementioned communities.

3. An inclusive, transparent process lends legitimacy to the outcome and acceptance by all stakeholders.

In conclusion, please support HB1422.