

SB8: General Provisions - State Song - Repeal
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SUPPORT

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members:

My name is Howie Denis, a former member of the Maryland State Senate 1977-1994 and former Montgomery County Councilman 2000-2006. I write today in full support of SB8, which would repeal Maryland's State Song.

As I shared in my oral testimony for HB667, Maryland has the only state song that calls for the violent overthrow of the government. It's rooted in hate and refers to Abraham Lincoln as a "tyrant." Removing this ode to the Confederacy has been on the minds of Marylanders for many years. While in the Senate, I proposed my own bill in 1980 to abolish the song. I am very proud to have been a part of the long history of bipartisan advocates against this embarrassing representation of our state.

"Maryland, My Maryland" is a symbol no different than driving down the road and seeing a Confederate flag outside of a home. Giving power to this time of division in our country is a tragic reminder that we are not all "created equal" as Lincoln once said.

We're well past the point where our State Song is appropriate. Though I might not have the expertise to write the new song, repealing this representation of our home is the first step in a long-fought journey to celebrate Maryland properly.

I urge a favorable report of SB8.

Howard Denis

Former Republican State Senator (D/16)