

SB0008-FAV-DTMG-3-11-21.pdf

Uploaded by: Bartlett, Olivia

Position: FAV



Olivia Bartlett, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Testimony on: SB0008 - General Provisions - State Song - Repeal

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: March 11, 2021

Bill Sponsor: Senator Cheryl Kagan

DoTheMostGood (DTMG) is a progressive grassroots organization with more than 2500 members who live in a wide range of communities in Montgomery and Frederick Counties, from Bethesda near the DC line north to Frederick and from Poolesville east to Silver Spring and Olney. DTMG supports legislation and activities that keep its members healthy and safe in a clean environment, uplift all members of our communities, and promote equity. DTMG strongly supports SB0008 because it will repeal Maryland's Confederate state song "Maryland! My Maryland!", removing a symbol of hate from the Maryland experience.

The deaths of George Floyd, Anton Black, and many others call attention to the structural and institutional racism before us and the need to continue fighting for a more equitable and just society. The Maryland state song is a Confederate embarrassment, from the first line, which refers to President Lincoln as a "despot," through the fifth stanza, which urges Marylanders to "burst the tyrant's chain" – the chain being not slavery, but Lincoln's call for abolition. Maryland! My Maryland! was written to protest Union Troops in Baltimore and Southern Confederate soldiers used it as a Civil War battle hymn. Maryland did not adopt Maryland! My Maryland! as our State song until 1939 – a time when Maryland was sadly among our nation's segregated "Jim Crow" states.

Words matter. In classrooms and on school sports fields, we have been teaching our children to sing a song that glorifies Maryland's shameful slave-holding history. If we are ever to reckon with our racist past and successfully build a future that embraces and protects all, we must move beyond these symbols that foster hate, exclusion, and injustice. Following the violence of Charlottesville, the January 6th insurrection that threatened our Democracy, and the calls for justice by the Black Lives Matter movement, the current social climate makes this the best time for Maryland to topple our musical monument to the Confederacy and send a strong message that all are welcome in today's Maryland.

While efforts for police reform and prison reform remain at the top of DoTheMostGood's social justice agenda, symbolism and representation can lead to larger conversations and provide a

needed avenue toward systemic change. Passage of SB0008 is one of many important steps the Maryland General Assembly can take this session to right the wrongs of the past.

DoTheMostGood is eager to work with Senator Cheryl Kagan to ensure the passage of this important bill that can position Maryland as a leader of social justice.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB0008.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivia Bartlett
Co-Lead, DoTheMostGood Maryland Team
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240-751-5599

SB0008 Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Davis, Maya

Position: FAV

Hon. Larry Hogan
Governor
Hon. Boyd K. Rutherford
Lt. Governor
Timothy D. Baker
State Archivist and
Commissioner of Land Patents
Matthew P. Lalumia
Chairman, Maryland Commission
on Artistic Property



Hall of Records Commission:
Hon. Mary Ellen Barbera, Chair
Ellington E. Churchill, Jr.
Robert L. Caret, Ph.D.
Ronald Daniels, L.L.M., J.D.
Hon. William C. Ferguson IV
Hon. Peter V. R. Franchot
Peter Kanelos, Ph.D.
Hon. Nancy K. Kopp
Mark Letzer
Hon. Samuel I. Rosenberg
David Wilson, Ed.D.

March 11, 2021

BILL: SB 8 - General Provisions - State Song - Repeal

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

POSITION: Letter of Support

SB 8, General Provisions - State Song - Repeal, repeals the current State Song, "Maryland, My Maryland" with no recommendation for replacement.

In October 2015, at the request of the Chair of the House Health and Government Operations Committee, the State Archivist convened an Advisory Group to study whether the State Song, "Maryland, My Maryland," was a fitting representation of Marylanders today and to recommend alternatives. The panel, which included experts in Maryland history, music history, military history, and cultural history and folklore, agreed that, except for the third verse, the words in the current song should be retired from statute because they are offensive to many and not inclusive of all Marylanders. Understanding that an advisory committee has already undertaken the work of reviewing the repeal of the state song, it is now time to move forward with a decision in regards to its repeal.

Recent events have made it necessary to revisit the removal of "Maryland, My Maryland" as the Official State Song. Long considered racist and offensive to the citizens of this state, it is time to retire "Maryland, My Maryland" and reevaluate the necessity of having an Official State Song. State designations and symbols must be identified and used with care. They should be inclusive of all citizens of the state and be representative of Maryland culture and traditions. Maryland's State Song has created a divide among the state's citizenry and should be eliminated in an effort to unify.

We urge you to give this bill a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration. If you have additional questions please call Liz Coelho at liz.coelho@maryland.gov.

Howard Denis Testimony SB8_ General Provisions - S

Uploaded by: Denis, Howard

Position: FAV

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)

LoS - State Song Repeal.pdf

Uploaded by: Dove, Spencer

Position: FAV

State of Maryland

Commission on Civil Rights

“Our vision is to have a State that is free from any trace of unlawful discrimination.”



Officers

Alvin O. Gillard, Executive Director
Nicolette Young, Assistant Director
Glendora C. Hughes, General Counsel

Governor
Larry Hogan
Lt. Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford
Commission Chairperson
Gary C. Norman, Esq.
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Roberto N. Allen, Esq.
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Allison U. Dichoso, Esq.
Hayden B. Duke
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Eileen M. Levitt, SPHR, SHRM-SCP
Rabbi Binyamin Marwick
Jeff Rosen
Gina McKnight-Smith, PharmD, MBA

March 11, 2021

Senate Bill 8 – General Provisions – State Song – Repeal **POSITION: Support**

Dear Chairperson Pinsky, Vice Chairperson Kagan, and Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee:

The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (“MCCR”; “The Commission”) is the State agency responsible for the enforcement of laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state contracts based upon race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, physical and mental disability, and source of income.

Senate Bill 8 repeals the State Song “Maryland! My Maryland!” effective July 1, 2021. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights supports SB8 because our State, with such notable citizens as Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglas, and Thurgood Marshall, deserves a symbol of Maryland pride that reflects the contributions and dignity of all across the State. SB8 rightfully retires this song to the annals of history, thereby creating an opportunity for Maryland to adopt a State Song that represents the very best that we have to offer.

For these reasons, the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights urges a favorable vote on SB8. Thank you for your time and consideration of the information contained in this letter. The Maryland Commission on Civil Rights looks forward to the continued opportunity to work with you to improve and promote civil rights in Maryland.

Comptroller's testimony on SB 8.pdf

Uploaded by: Franchot, Comptroller

Position: FAV



Peter Franchot
Comptroller

TESTIMONY OF COMPTROLLER PETER FRANCHOT

Support - Senate Bill 8 - General Provisions - State Song - Repeal

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 11, 2021

Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to provide testimony in **support** of **Senate Bill 8 - General Provisions - State Song - Repeal**. I would like to thank Senator Kagan for sponsoring this legislation.

For too long, Marylanders have had to grapple with our state song "Maryland, My Maryland" and all its outdated and offensive references. From a hostile reference to Lincoln, to talking about "the Northern scum", this song has long been contradictory to values Marylanders hold. There was only one correct "side" to be on during the Civil War, and I think it's time our state song recognizes that. I firmly believe the state song should be repealed.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request a **favorable report** for Senate Bill 8. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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SB 8 - Jawando Testimony in SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Jawando, Will

Position: FAV

Montgomery County Council
Office of Councilmember Will Jawando
Progress / Opportunity / Together

SB0008 - State Song Repeal

Testimony of Will Jawando, Montgomery County Council At-Large

Position: SUPPORT

February 24, 2021

Dear Esteemed Members of the General Assembly,

As an At-Large Councilmember on the Montgomery County Council, I write today in favor of repealing the Maryland state song. In July 2020, I joined my colleagues on the Council in calling for sending the official state song, a vestige of white supremacy and an ode to the Confederacy, into the ash heap of history where it belongs. The Maryland state song is supposed to invoke pride in the state we all call our home but for Marylanders of color, our current song is another glaring reminder of how deep our sordid, racist history runs. The state song is another Confederate monument that must be taken down and replaced with a symbol of diversity, equity, and the promise of a better Maryland for all. We cannot reckon with our past or build an equitable tomorrow if we celebrate our state at its very worst. I urge the General Assembly to take the common-sense step of repealing the state song and barring its use at any public event.

Will Jawando, Montgomery County Councilmember At-Large

SB8_ State Song Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: Kagan, Sen. Cheryl

Position: FAV

CHERYL C. KAGAN
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Vice Chair
Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Joint Audit Committee
Joint Committee on Federal Relations



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB8: General Provisions – State Song – Repeal
Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 1pm
Senate Education, Health, And Environmental Affairs Committee

Maryland's State Song contains offensive lyrics that defend slavery and glorify an era of racial discrimination. Several have attempted to repeal and/or replace "[Maryland, My Maryland](#)," including my own efforts with [SB222](#) in 2016 and [SB790](#) in 2018.

[SB8](#) would finally repeal our State Song.

The poem that provided the song's lyrics was written in 1861 by a Confederate sympathizer, James Ryder Randall. He was outraged by Union troops marching through Baltimore to overthrow the government. President Abraham Lincoln is called a "despot," and those opposing the Confederacy are called "Northern scum." Even prior to its adoption in 1939 as the State Song, the poem was viewed as inflammatory and divisive.

Maryland's residents swell with state pride. Our flag is on countless items ranging from team uniforms, home decorations, bumper stickers, and even COVID-19 masks. Most state songs reference the beauty of the land, the pride in history, and the strength of the people. If nothing else, it is a shame that ours does not.

In the wake of George Floyd's murder and the Black Lives Matter protests, many states have removed their Confederate statues and symbols. As a progressive state, it is imperative that Maryland cut ties with this deplorable ode to the Confederacy.

Words matter. I urge a favorable report on SB8.

2021-03-11 SB 8 (Support).pdf

Uploaded by: Kemerer, Hannibal

Position: FAV

BRIAN E. FROSH
Attorney General



ELIZABETH F. HARRIS
Chief Deputy Attorney General

CAROLYN QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FACSIMILE NO.

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.

410-576-6584

March 11, 2021

TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB0008: General Provisions – State Song – Repeal (**SUPPORT**)

There is no dispute that when James Ryder Randall wrote “Maryland, My Maryland” in 1891, he was expressing sympathy for the Confederacy and objecting to the Union troops who had entered Baltimore in the early days of the Civil War. Indeed, the song was used as a Confederate battle hymn and advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government. It is a reflection of our state’s racist past and must finally be retired. For years, the General Assembly has attempted to repeal and/or replace the State Song to no avail. This session, as the country experiences sustained protests against police brutality and systemic racism and just weeks ago witnessed the real horror of a hate-fueled riot on the U.S. Capitol, we can no longer afford to ignore this divisive anthem.

Senate Bill 8, Senator Kagan’s bill to repeal the State song, is a worthwhile and timely effort to banish “Maryland, My Maryland” to the dustbin of history.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of Attorney General urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 8.

cc: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

SB0008 WDC Testimony State Song Repeal 3.11.21.pdf

Uploaded by: Macomber, Virginia

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

Senate Bill SB0008 – General Provisions – State Song Repeal

Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee – March 11, 2021

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 2021 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active women and men, including many elected officials.

WDC urges the passage of SB0008 – General Provisions – State Song Repeal. This bill will repeal Maryland's Confederate State song *Maryland! My Maryland!*.

Maryland is the only state in the country with a Confederate symbol for its State song, *Maryland! My Maryland!* - a symbol that is no different than flying the Confederate flag over the Statehouse. The lyrics to *Maryland! My Maryland!* glorify Maryland's shameful slave-holding history, including honoring former Governor Enoch Lewis who urged Maryland to secede from the Union and gave moral and material support to the Confederacy. *Maryland! My Maryland!* was written to protest Union Troops in Baltimore and Southern Confederate soldiers used it as a Civil War battle hymn. Maryland did not adopt *Maryland! My Maryland!* as our State song until 1939 – a time when Maryland was sadly among our nation's segregated "Jim Crow" states.

This past year has seen a long-overdue reckoning throughout our Country about our Confederate past and the power of its symbols to still foster hate. The recent insurrection and occupation of the Capitol, including the erection of a scaffold with a noose and numerous Confederate flags waving in the halls of Congress, have shone a harsh light on why symbols like our State song matter, and why the Legislature must make the repeal of *Maryland! My Maryland!* a priority this session.

We ask for your support for SB0008 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Maryland must stop honoring the "Lost Cause" by repealing our Confederate State song, *Maryland! My Maryland!*, and sending a clear message that all lives matter in today's Maryland.

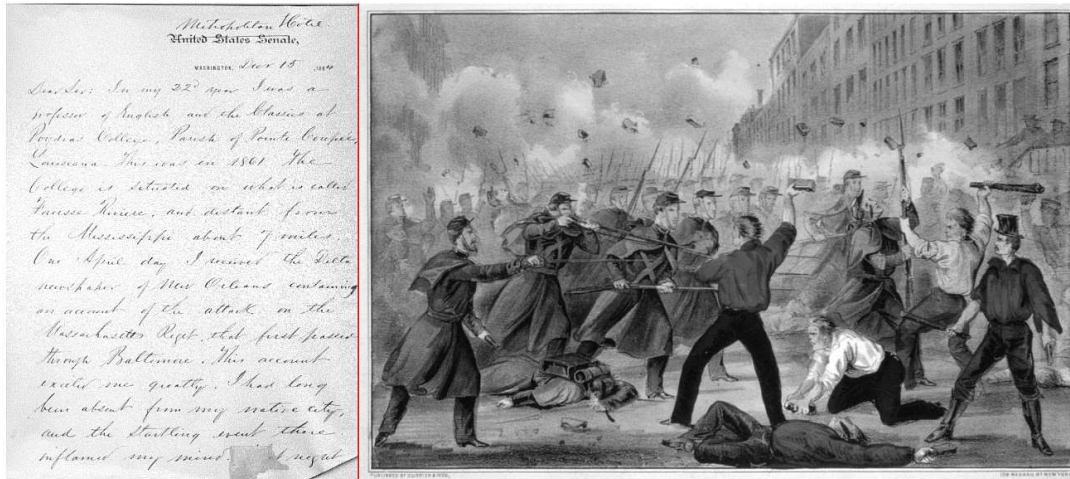
Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President

papenfuse_sb8_state_song.pdf

Uploaded by: Papenfuse, Edward

Position: FAV



The April 19, 1861 riot resulted in the first casualty list of the war. Eight rioters, one innocent bystander and three soldiers were killed, twenty four soldiers and an unknown number of civilians wounded.

Senator Pinsky, members of the Committee,

my name is Edward Papenfuse, formerly the Archivist of Maryland

I come to you today in support of Senator Cheryl C. Kagan's bill to abolish the State Song, *Maryland My Maryland*.

If those who violently stormed the U.S. capitol on January 6, 2021 had the mental capacity to rapturize their efforts in a poem and place it to music, they could not do better than James Ryder Randall did with what is now our State Song, *Maryland My Maryland*.

In April 1861, at the age of 22, a professor of English and the Classics at a small college in Louisiana, Randall was so sympathetic to the riotous Baltimore mob that attacked the Massachusetts soldiers on their way to the defense of Washington, that he wrote a stirring account of their "patriotic gore."

As he explained in a letter written in 1884 on stationery "borrowed" or stolen from the United States Senate:

"One April Day I received the Delta newspaper of New Orleans containing an

account of the attack on the Massachusetts Regiment that first passed through Baltimore. This account excited me greatly. I had long been absent from my native city, and the startling event there inflamed my mind that night."

Randall's response was a poem that has been labeled the "Marseillaise of the Confederacy," sung by soldiers charged with defending the institution of slavery, and by Marylanders as the State Song since 1939, when the legislature rejected Governor Nice's veto, passed the bill again, and it was signed into law by Governor Nice's successor.

As the *Afro-American* headlined its reporting of Governor Nice's veto:

Original Words Stir Sectional Prejudice by reference to "Tyrants" "Vandals" and "Northern Scum." *Afro-American*, January 14, 1939.

In fact Randall's words do more than stir sectional prejudice. They glorify the actions of the mob as "patriotic gore", they enshrine a world in which slavery was considered righteous, and mob violence a virtue.

As Jack L. Levin lamented in an op ed piece in 1993 entitled "...A hateful state song," all those who were being urged

"not to "cower in the dust" were the owners and exploiters of some 84,000 slaves still in bondage in Maryland when the song was written ...

How many more generations of peaceful youngsters [adults, and sports fans] must be incited to "avenge the patriotic gore that flecked the streets of Baltimore"?"

It is time to put Maryland My Maryland back on the shelves of the Archives, there to be interpreted as an artifact of a past that I fervently hope is behind us.

This is not the first time that I have advocated consigning "Maryland My Maryland" to the history books. I hope it is my last, and that you will give your whole and unqualified support to Senator Kagan's bill.

Edward C. Papenfuse,
Maryland State Archivist, retired

Text of Maryland My Maryland by James Ryder Randall:

The despot's heel is on thy shore
Maryland, my Maryland
His torches at thy temple door
Maryland, my Maryland
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore
And be the battle queen of yore
Maryland, my Maryland
Thou wilt not cower in the dust
Maryland, my Maryland
Thy beaming sword shall never rust
Maryland, my Maryland
Remember Carroll's sacred trust
Remember Howard's warlike thrust
And though thy slumberers with the just
Maryland, my Maryland
Dear mother, burst the tyrant's chain
Maryland, my Maryland
Virginia should not call in vain
Maryland, my Maryland
She meets her sisters on the plain
"Sic semper" 'tis the proud refrain
That baffle's minions back o'Maine
Maryland, my Maryland
Arise, arise in majesty again
Maryland, Maryland, my Maryland

HB0667.pdf

Uploaded by: Schablein, Jared

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY FOR HB0667

General Provisions - State Song - Repeal

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Sample-Hughes

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Lower Shore Progressive Caucus

Person Submitting: Amber Green, LSPC Member

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0667 on behalf of the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus. The Caucus is a political and activist organization on the Eastern Shore, unaffiliated with any political party, committed to empowering working people by building a Progressive movement on the Lower Eastern Shore.

The current version of the Maryland State Song is a harmful call of support to the traitorous confederacy and the horrors of slavery they fought to uphold. The song has been a rallying cry for White Supremacists and other extremists to commit acts of racial terror on the Eastern Shore both in the past and to this very day. To keep this despicable song as our State song would do nothing but embolden these hate groups and normalize their acts of terror against People of Color in my community.

It is for these reasons the Lower Shore Progressive Caucus supports this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Syrrakos SB0008 Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Syrrakos, Holly

Position: FAV

SB 0008 – SUPPORT
GENERAL PROVISIONS – STATE SONG – REPEAL
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee:

I am a long-time resident of Maryland and believe we must stop honoring the Confederacy with our state song, *Maryland! My Maryland!* I am in SUPPORT of SB 0008.

The lyrics to *Maryland! My Maryland!* glorify and honor the state's slaveholding past. In 2021, this is no longer something we want to do, rather we want to make people of all colors welcome in our state.

I have a M.A. in American History, which I earned at the University of Maryland. It was there, under the direction of noted historian Dr. Ira Berlin that I had the opportunity to participate in research at the National Archives pertaining to the experience of enslaved people and their struggle for freedom. I learned there was nothing honorable about the Confederacy and its fight to maintain a slave society.

I also spent my career as a graphic designer and that is where I learned that symbols matter, and words matter. I would never have used a symbol like the Confederate flag because it is in itself a divisive force and stands as a relic of traitors to the U.S.

The words in *Maryland! My Maryland!* reflect Maryland's shameful past, not our current values. It is time for repeal.

I urge a favorable report on SB 0008.

*Submitted by Holly Syrrakos, hollyrockus@gmail.com, 301-312-2525
March 11, 2021*

Final Senate Testimony 3_09.pdf

Uploaded by: Teichert, Diane

Position: FAV

Senate Bill 0008 – General Provisions – State Song Repeal
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee – March 11, 2021

SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important symbolic gesture that will reinforce the Legislature's commendable commitments to justice under the law for all Marylanders in 2021: **REPEAL *Maryland! My Maryland!* as our State Song**. In this year of necessary restrictions due to the pandemic, I believe your top priority should be to repeal the song in the 2021 session, leaving the matter of its replacement for post-session. Therefore, I urge you to support SB0008 sponsored by Senator Kagan and SB0341 submitted by the Maryland State Archives, rather than SB0087 sponsored by Senator West.

Maryland is the only state in the country with a Confederate symbol for its State song. Its lyrics glorify Maryland's shameful slave-holding history. To think that Maryland children have been singing this awful song for seven decades makes me cringe with angry embarrassment. That is why I initiated a virtual chorus production of a possible replacement song, premiered at the **Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland's** 2021 kick-off event on January 23rd, with Senate President Bill Ferguson giving the Keynote Address and Delegate Alonzo Washington giving the closing Call to Action, with more than 100 Marylanders attending. (I am a Vice Chair of UULM MD).

Furthermore, I believe repealing our horribly racist state song is a small but required reparative action to move from truth towards reconciliation for the legacies of slavery such as the racial terror lynchings in our state. As a co-chair of the **Prince George's County Lynching Memorial Project**, which "educates the public on the truths of our nation's continuing legacy of slavery, memorializes victims of the five known racial terror lynchings in our county, and advances the cause of racial justice and reconciliation through mutual support and collaboration," I urge you to repeal of the State Song and also commend the legislature for its pioneering creation and support of the State of Maryland Lynching Memorial Commission, the first in the nation.

When you need a five-minute uplift, please watch [Maryland, My Maryland: The Free State Song](#) (lyrics by Rep. Jamie Raskin, composed by Steve Jones, video by Nadja Bruskin). It is fun to sing, with lyrics we can sing with pride, extolling democracy, not the Confederacy. Plus it is a great teaching tool, with its images of famous people and places of Maryland. Our diverse singers are residents from around the state.

In closing, I ask for your support for Senate Bills 008/0341 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. Let this be the year for us to topple Maryland's musical monument to the Confederacy and send a strong message that all are welcome and equal in today's Maryland.

Rev. Diane Teichert

Minister Emerita, Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church, Adelphi, MD

Co-Vice Chair, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of MD

Co-Chair, Prince George's County Lynching Memorial Project

Home address: 4321 Van Buren Street. University Park, MD 20782

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revdteichert@gmail.com

SB0008 Repeal State Song - Webber Testimony - Fav

Uploaded by: Webber, Scott

Position: FWA

Scott Webber

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240-994-4670

SB0008 – State Song -- Repeal [And Replace]

**** Favorable With Amendment ****

March 11, 2021

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, Esteemed Members of the MD Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, All Members of the MD General Assembly, All Marylanders, All Americans, and all of Humanity,

I write in favor of repealing the current state song for the simple reason that it does not properly, effectively, or honestly reflect the aspirations of our beautiful State.

Music and song are almost as universal as eating and sleeping.

Songs have meaning and songs are powerful and inspire people.

Music Makes the World a Better Place... but it can also cause hurt and pain and division.

That is the case of our current, racist, divisive, State Song.

As the well-known saying goes,

“If you have nothing nice to sing, don’t sing anything at all!

Given the choice of a hurtful song... or no song... we are better with no ‘official’ song.

However, I would put forth a friendly amendment for consideration by the sponsoring Vice-Chair and fellow Committee Members, to designate ‘*Maryland My Maryland*’ written by former MD Senator, Jamie Raskin, as an interim Official State Song.

<https://fb.watch/47wsIsJKSL/>

All of Maryland would benefit from the positive, uplifting, all-inclusive, NON-partisan, role-modeling aspirational message embodied in this song at a time when we so badly need such messaging – I would put forth this bill should be granted Emergency status!

Most sincerely,



20210311 - MD State Song - SB0008-SB0087-SB0341 v1

Uploaded by: Barringer, John

Position: UNF

March 11th, 2021 – Maryland State Song – SB0008/SB0087/SB0341

I am opposed to any legislation to alter or abolish Randall’s “Maryland, My Maryland”.

Question: Which president directed the U.S. military to enforce the following policies in Maryland: recruit and station a large standing army without state consent; establish military control over functional civil authority; assume command and control over all police and state government; seize transportation and communication systems; seize and search all boats and ships; forcibly enter the houses of private citizens; suspend the 2nd Amendment and writ of habeas corpus; arrest citizens and transport them to other states for trial; requisition private property of citizens; stop and frisk citizens without cause; and imprison citizens without due process? *Answer:* President Lincoln. These are irrefutable facts.

Any president who committed such gross usurpations of our Constitution, however, would rightfully be called a “despot”; and that would be one of the kinder appellations. Ironically, the 1st Article in Maryland’s “Declaration of Rights” states, “... *the People ... have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish their Form of Government in such manner as they may deem expedient.*” Pres. Lincoln denied Maryland citizens that right. Maryland’s unique, vibrant, and sometimes turbulent history is clearly embodied in James Randall’s *Maryland, My Maryland*. It includes history from the Revolutionary, Mexican-American, and Civil Wars; and it highlights Maryland’s and America’s history, citizens, and trials during these seminal events.

Other state songs typically bore the listener with insipid geography lessons or generic recitations of ideals to which the citizens of any state might ascribe. Our current state song, like our state flag, far transcends all others in history, distinctiveness, and beauty. Moreover, if ideological purity is the objective in the cancel culture purge of all things deemed “offensive” according to the prevailing zeitgeist, *what is next?* Perhaps our state flag with the coats of arms from the slave-holding Calvert and Crossland families – most notably the “cross bottany” with its secessionist red and white colors adopted by Maryland’s Confederate soldiers? Our flag emblazons everything from flip-flops to flag finials; but it, like the state song, is still a part of Maryland history and both should remain. This legislation is not in Maryland’s best interests.

These bills censor our state’s distinctive story, condemn the state song on the gallows of a national history cleansing frenzy, and deprive future generations of learning some tough truth of cataclysmic epochs in our federal and state history. Once gone, Randall’s *Maryland, My Maryland* is forgotten. This legislation, reminiscent of the ancient Roman practice of “damnatio memoriae”, ensures that it will never be studied or sung again. Please do not support this or any legislation to alter or abolish our state song or history.

Thank you,

John T. Barringer, II

2131 Agrippas Court

Eldersburg, MD 21784

410-549-0160 / rebpiper@hotmail.com

NFINK-SB0008SB0341OpposeMDSongRepeal.pdf

Uploaded by: Fink, Nelda

Position: UNF

Written Testimony OPPOSING SB 008 & SB 341 – Repealing MD Song
Nelda Fink, 8372 Norwood Dr, Millersville
MD District 32

SB 341 and SB 008 calling for the repeal of the Maryland song. Sounds like trying to rewrite history here. I oppose this just like I oppose removal of anything historical. As the poem states the enemy is not only at our banks, but also on our soil. Please oppose this bill.

Please do not pass this bill!

I oppose it completely!

Sincerely,

Nelda Fink

OPPOSING SB 008 & SB 341 – Repealing MD Song

SB08MDmyMD.pdf

Uploaded by: Klima, Terry

Position: UNF

SB08 Senator Kagen General Provisions – Repeal State Song

Unfavorable- Opposed

Terry M. Klima, 14 Chapel Manor Court, Perry Hall MD

I appreciate this opportunity to testify in opposition to **SB08**, calling for the repeal of our State song.,

Sadly, this song which chronicles Maryland's history, has been much maligned with false claims that the song has racist connotations, condones slavery and advocates treasonous actions and the overthrow of the government. All of these claims are patently false.

While it is clearly documented that James Ryder, Randall wrote the poem immediately following the events of April 19th, 1865 when violence erupted between Baltimoreans and members of the 6th Massachusetts militia, the claim that the song was adopted by the Maryland Legislature for a nefarious purpose is completely unsubstantiated.

Historically, the song enjoyed immense popularity within the State well before its official adoption as the State Song in 1939 and was showcased, along with the Star-Spangled Banner, at the State of Maryland's exhibition at the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition. The State of Maryland even commissioned the issuance of a Commemorative Coin for this event, featuring the likeness of James Ryder Randall and Francis Scott Key and the titles of their works.

A common criticism of the song involves the usage of the terms "despot and tyrant", presumably a reference to *President Abraham Lincoln*. How else would one describe the untold Constitutional usurpations and deprivations suffered by Marylanders at the hands of an occupying military force? Examples of such treatment include the suspension of habeas corpus, the arrest of members of the Maryland Legislature suspected of having southern sympathies, arrest of newspaper editors for views deemed unacceptable by the Lincoln Administration, vote manipulation, threats to destroy Baltimore City from cannon placement on Federal Hill and the illegal and unconstitutional arrests of Maryland citizens. Rather than a clarion call to join the Confederacy, many view the song as a reminder of the indignities Maryland suffered when the protections afforded US citizens under the Constitution were not upheld.

There have also been aspersions that the song, directly or indirectly, endorses slavery. While it has become popular to portray the war as a morality play over the issue of slavery, facts dispel the myth. Slavery unfortunately was sanctioned by the United States Constitution until December 6, 1865, when the 13th Amendment was ratified. President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of September of 1862 freed no slaves held in any states that had not seceded from the Union including Maryland. Rather than repudiate the practice of slavery, Maryland's Unionist Legislature ratified the controversial "Corwin" Constitutional Amendment on January 10th, 1862 which stated, "No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State."

For these reasons, I oppose the bill to repeal our State Song "Maryland, My Maryland".

Maryland, My Maryland - 2021.pdf

Uploaded by: Zebelean, John

Position: UNF

John P. Zebelean, III
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I'm adamantly opposed to the repeal of *Maryland, My Maryland* as our State Song. Composer James Ryder Randall speaks to the most tumultuous period in Maryland's long history. *Maryland, My Maryland* drips history. Few people are knowledgeable of its verses or origin because it is no longer taught or sung in Maryland public schools unlike when I was in elementary school.

Some claim that the song is racist, yet there's not a racist word in it. It speaks of despotism and 'despot' fits Mr. Lincoln's Administration. Maryland had not seceded, yet her citizens were denied their Constitutionally guaranteed protections as Lincoln unilaterally suspended the right of Habeas Corpus. Never mind that the Constitution only allows temporary suspension when authorized by the Legislative branch not the Executive. Marylanders suffered flagrant Constitutional abuses which included unlawful imprisonment of hundreds of citizens, violation of freedom of the press, speech, and 2nd Amendment rights. Talbot County Circuit Court Judge Richard B. Carmichael was literally dragged from the bench during court by Federal troops and pistol whipped before being incarcerated in Boston for signing writs of Habeas Corpus. Also arrested and held without trial were Baltimore police commissioners, city council members, a Maryland Congressman, and finally members of this very Legislature, including the speaker of the House, all of whom spent months jailed in Boston Harbor.

History is complicated; it can't be changed, but attempts can be made to obliterate or pave over it. Let's not forget the history of Maryland where in the 1860 election, Abraham Lincoln ran a distant fourth garnering just over two per cent of the vote. Maryland cast its lot with John Breckinridge. During the Civil War, Maryland was occupied by thousands of Federal troops imposing martial law. Just as our National Anthem is the product of dangerous times in Maryland, so too does our State Song reflect a troubled period, a period that must not be forgotten.

Repeal of *Maryland My Maryland* would be yet another act in the cancel culture movement. As a veteran of two tours in Vietnam, and service during Desert Storm, I resent the removal of historical monuments just as I oppose the repeal of our State Song that captures Maryland's darkest hour. I urge this committee to resist the temptation to obliterate more of Maryland's historical past.