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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 24, 2021

SUPPORT
HB389 General Provisions - State Song - Repeal and Competition

Dear Chairman Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk and Committee Members,

HB389 is the re-worked version of 2016 legislation, HB417 introduced then Delegate (now Senator and sponsor of HB389's senate crossfire) Chris West and myself. It repeals *Maryland, My Maryland* and directs the Maryland State Arts Council to conduct a competition for a new State Song.

The bill seeks to incorporate the findings and recommendations of the 2015 State Song Advisory Group, the best parts of the nine state song repeal bills introduced and heard by this committee between 2016 and 2019, and the sentiments expressed by members of the committee in considering those bills. **HB389** directs that the replacement songs recommended in those previous bills, and the six options for replacement offered by the Advisory Group be automatically entered for consideration in the competition, which would be open for public submission as well.

The Council would determine the nature of, rules for, and the finalists of the competition, and would promote and run it. The finalists would then report to the Governor and General Assembly, and we, by virtue of introduction and passage of legislation, would determine the new State Song from among the finalists. In a nod to the expressed preference of at least one member of this committee, The Commission may recommend in it's reports that we opt to have no State Song at all, and the General Assembly may, by either action or inaction, occur.

The Council is able to conduct the competition within its current budget, so **HB389** achieves the goals of repealing and creating a public mechanism to replace the State Song, while creating an opportunity to generate public enthusiasm and build unity at a time when it is much needed, without additional state funding. That's a win-win, and a step to move Maryland beyond our past to a better future.

I ask for a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri L. Hill".