

February 24th, 2021 – Maryland State Song – HB0389, HB0437, HB0667

I write in opposition to this legislation. 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; suspend the 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?

No, it was not President Trump. It was President Lincoln. 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 that “... *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* and it includes history from the Revolutionary, Mexican-American, and Civil Wars. There is much to learn about Maryland’s and America’s history, citizens, and trials during these seminal events. The state songs of other states are split almost evenly between insipid geography lessons and generic recitations of ideals to which the citizens of any state might ascribe. Our current state song, like our state flag, stands out far above all others in history, clarity, and beauty. And, speaking of the state flag, if ideological purity is the objective in the 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? It emblazons everything from flip-flops to flag finials; but it is still a part of Maryland history like the state song.

This legislation is not in Maryland’s past, present, or future interests. It censors our state’s distinctive story, condemns the state song on the gallows of a national culture cleansing frenzy, and deprives future generations of learning some tough truth of a cataclysmic epoch in our federal and state history. Once gone, it is forgotten. This legislation, reminiscent of the ancient Roman practice of “damnatio memoriae”, ensures that it will never be studied or discussed again. Please do not support this or any legislation to alter or eliminate our state song or history.

Thank you,

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