

## HB-655 Testimony

February 5, 2021

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice Chair, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

I live in Church Hill, in District 1 of Queen Anne's County (green on accompanying map). Geographically, this is the largest of the four districts. My district, D-1, is the most rural, and therefore is at least 2-3 times larger than the other three districts. Most recent data show a population in D-1 at approx. 10,900 people. The average income in D-1 is approx. \$67,845.

Please see the short list of districts below. Note the disparity of not only population, but also income. If you are a candidate for county commissioner, with all districts voting for all candidates, it is obvious where you would spend your time, energy, and money.

No wonder we in D-1 never see or hear from our county commissioner. Most residents don't even know who he is. The issues that concern D-1 voters (rural, ag, low income) will surely differ from those of D-4 voters, with their heftier incomes and double the population.

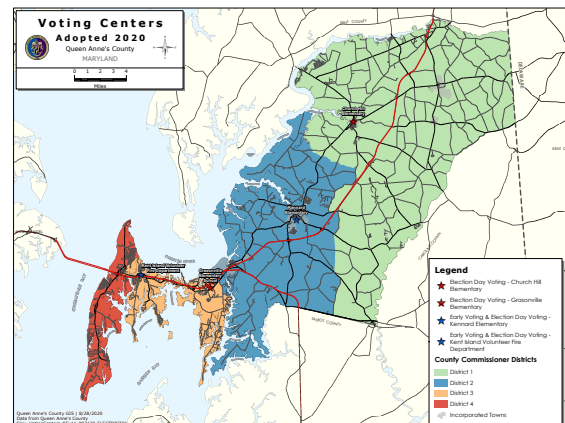
This is most definitely a problem of equity, or rather inequity. It is specifically not a partisan issue—Democrats and Republicans have supported or opposed the idea of district limits in close to equal numbers over the years.

Most voters in D-4 work on the western shore—Annapolis, DC, or Baltimore area—and D-1 is a summer day-trip destination, but little more. Because of their dense population and tight geographic area, they have the ear of every local elected official. If the squeaky wheel gets the grease, D-4 definitely has the bigger squeak!

It is a matter of fairness and balance to amend the voting requirements for our local representatives. It is also a matter of accountability. County commissioners need to attend the issues of their individual districts and they must be accessible and accountable to the resident voters of their districts. One "at-large" candidate, voted on by all county voters is, by definition, a means of bringing all districts into one body that serves the wider community.

Districts	Population	Avg. Income
D-1 (green)	10,920	\$67,845
D-2 (blue)	11,835	\$103,000
D-3 (orange)	8,750	\$103,000
D-4 (red)	19,170	\$101,000

(Note: Data taken from online sources, 2018-2019, is best approximation)



Thank you for your consideration of the issue. I support HB655, and I am asking today for a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Marion Grier  
Church Hill, MD