

Madam Chair, Mr. Vice-Chair and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, I'm Charlene Pullias, President of the Garrett County Democratic Club and I want to thank you for letting me testify before your Committee in support of Maryland House Bill 0655 which would require that Maryland county commissioners be elected by a plurality of the vote in their own districts, rather than at-large.

I'm from Garrett County where our television comes from Pittsburgh, much of our healthcare comes from Morgantown and the political attitude comes from the last century. The "at large" system in our county has facilitated the exclusion of one gender and one political party from the process. This single party domination at the Commissioner level has led to a decrease in population, continued investment in industrial parks that are not needed or well occupied and a retreat to tribalism as demonstrated by their recent designation of Garrett County as a Second Amendment Preservation County.

This legislation will be very helpful to the voters in Garrett County where there has not been a Democrat or a woman on the County Commission in more than 25 years. Democrats are a minority county wide, but they deserve a chance, women are a majority in the county and they deserve a seat at the table.

We are very eager to join the rest of Maryland by having access to Maryland TV, a more progressive view towards governmental administration and the abolition of at-large voting for county Commissions. Madame Chair, the Democrats of Garrett County support this legislation and we are asking for a favorable report from the Ways and Means Committee. Thank You

Signed:

Charlene B. Pullias

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