

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
**COMMISSIONERS OF
ST. MARY'S COUNTY**



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HB 447
Local Elections - County Commissioner - District Voting

OPPOSE

February 14, 2023

The Honorable Vanessa Atterbeary, Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and the Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I am writing to express my Strong OPPOSITION to HB 447 regarding Local Elections - County Commissioner - District Voting in St Mary's County, Maryland. Delegate Brian Crosby of District 29B has introduced this legislation but refuses to explain why he feels it is necessary or what ills it would remedy. I personally spoke with Delegate Crosby regarding this issue and asked him why he feels this bill is necessary, to which he simply responded that I, and anyone else, should listen to his presentation to your committee to hear his response. I consider this non-response to be an attempt to sidestep or otherwise ignore the citizens and elected officials of Saint Mary's county. I feel the citizens of Saint Mary's county deserve more of an explanation than just "showing up and listening to his presentation."

St Mary's County has a long history using the current form of electing Commissioners and has refused challenges like HB 447 in the past. Several years ago, the County decided to entertain changing the form of government to Code Home Rule and held many public meetings to discuss the pros and cons of such a change. The results: the citizens of Saint Mary's county spoke and defeated the issue resoundingly. If Delegate Crosby feels the issue is so important, I would hope he would want to explain his reasoning in a public forum and elicit the comments and input from the citizens of this county. His disregard for the clear and popular opinion of the citizens of our county is another slap in the face to the voters of St Mary's County.

Saint Mary's county should be governed based on the will of its citizens. If anyone feels changing our form of government is warranted, I would suggest we hold a County referendum on the issue and let the voters tell us how they feel. Again, for Delegate Crosby to "go it alone" without inputs from elected leaders or the public is an affront to our citizens, and HB 447 should be rescinded immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Scott R. Ostrow
County Commissioner,
District 4