

HB447 Testimony

February 14, 2023

Good day, Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and distinguished members of the committee.

I live in Church Hill, in District 1 of Queen Anne’s County (see accompanying map). Geographically, this is the largest of the four districts. My district is the most rural and therefore is at least 2-3 times larger than the other three districts. The 2020 census shows population in D-1 at 12,641 people. The average income in D-1 is approximately \$68,000.

When 5 votes are less than 1. Districts in QAC have extraordinary disparities in income. Please see the short list of districts below. 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. Commissioners are representing voters in other districts their districts, not local residents.

Most residents don’t know who their representative is. The issues that concern D-1 voters (rural, ag jobs, healthcare access, low income) surely differ from those of D-4 voters, with their heftier incomes. And no doubt the residents in D-2, D-3, and D-4 are more concerned about the ever-increasing density and disappearing critical areas.

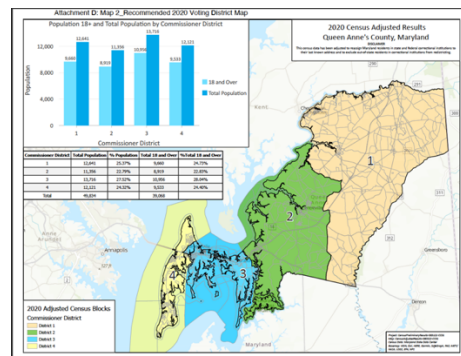
For Queen Anne’s County, this is a problem of equity, or maybe “lack of equity.” It is not a partisan issue—Democrats and Republicans in the county have supported or opposed the idea of district limits in close to equal numbers over the years.

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 an issue of democratic representation and accountability to amend the voting requirements for our local representatives. County commissioners must be accountable to the resident voters of their districts and they need to bring relevant issues to the table.

Districts	Population	Avg. Income*
D-1 (tan)	12,641	\$67,845
D-2 (green)	11,356	\$103,000
D-3 (blue)	13,716	\$103,000
D-4 (yellow)	12,121	\$101,000

* Data on income taken from online sources, 2018-2019, are best approximation.



Thank you for your consideration of the issue. I support HB447, and I am asking today for a favorable report.

Respectfully,

Marion Grier
Church Hill, MD