

HB 447
Local Elections - County Commissioner - District Voting
February 10th, 2023

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Henry J. Meiser, 14286 Solomons Island Road South Solomons, Maryland 20688
(240)-925-0600, henry.meiser@gmail.com

RE: HB 447 – Local Elections – County Commissioner –District Voting

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Henry J. Meiser, and I am a resident of legislative district 29B in Calvert County, one of the jurisdictions which would be impacted by House Bill 447. I apologize for not being able to testify in-person, as I will be serving as a Student Page and am prevented from taking official stances on legislation during this one-week period. With this in mind, please accept this written testimony in **unequivocal favor of House Bill 447**.

House Bill 447 would require that certain County Commissioners (namely, those from St. Mary's, Calvert, and Garrett Counties) to be elected by those they will represent. HB 447 is not one that requires extensive review to understand its impact – it makes logical sense. This bill hinges on the principles of representational democracy – the governing of a group of people which *that group* elects.

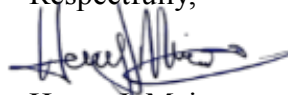
The American experiment is founded upon the principles of a representative democracy which places power in the hands of elected officials, or representatives, who are elected to office by the people represented. This system fails however when government officials are elected by voters other than those whose interests they are charged to represent.

A Virginia resident would not vote for the Maryland Governor, because the Maryland Governor would not be representing them. It makes sense – why should someone be able to vote for someone who is not representing them? It dilutes the vote of those who actually should be represented by that elected official.

Similarly, why should someone, who resides in the 3rd County Commissioner District of Calvert County, have the ability to vote for the representative of someone who lives in the 1st County Commissioner District of Calvert County. The answer is, they should not have that ability – HB 447 corrects this error, which only exists in 3 counties out of the entire State. This does not take away anyones vote – everyone still has an opportunity to vote for a County Commissioner to represent them, just not an opportunity to dictate who represents others outside of their district. It is time to correct this clear error, which is diminishing the voice of certain communities within our State.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to issue a favorable report for House Bill 447.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Henry J. Meiser", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Henry J. Meiser
Resident, Legislative District 29B