

My name is Thomas Mattingly, resident of Leonardtown, Md. I am a former county commissioner and had the privilege of serving three consecutive county commissioner terms in office from 1998 until 2022. I am testifying in opposition to the proposed House Bill 0447. I feel that the opportunity to serve as a county commissioner effectively, requires the commissioner to have a broad understanding of the needs of the entire county and all of our citizen. By campaigning only in one district in order to get elected, the candidate will not get a full perspective of the needs of the county and the commissioner will focus on that district only and not have the opportunity to hear from the citizen at large and their opinions. In order to form good policy decisions, it is necessary to understand the feelings of citizens throughout the county and that they know your positions on issues as well. During my 12 years in office, I reached out to citizens throughout the county for opinions and used that to guide my decisions. A good candidate needs this kind of understanding of the voters and not just those in one small district in the county. During my three terms, each board had members change in each election based on the citizens choices and we reached out to all areas of the county to form our positions. It worked well and has for many years. If there is a desire to change the way we elect our future commissioner, let that decision be done by the St. Mary's County voters and not by a piece of state legislation.