

Good Afternoon Chair Atterbeary, Vice-Chair Wilkins, and distinguished members of this committee,

My name is Kaitlin Fraer, I am a lifetime resident of St. Mary's County and am requesting an unfavorable report on HB0597.

It is difficult to oppose a bill measuring the wants and needs of St. Mary's County. A straw poll seems like an excellent nonpartisan way to gauge our feelings- citizens need a voice in local and state governments. However, Delegates Matt & Todd Morgan and the County Commissioners have spent the last few weeks since Delegate Crosby's bill was submitted poisoning the waters and riling up a partisan response to HB0447. It only takes a quick look at the recent edition of the St. Mary's County times, owned by former Republican County Commissioner McKay, and a quick scroll through the quotes and articles to see that there is a significant response to HB0447 by the Republican Party in St. Mary's County.

Again, while a straw poll might seem like a small measure to gauge the pulse of St Marys County, it does not hold the county responsible for implementing the poll results. This bill is not a referendum; even if it was, the main issue still stands. The large majority of the county is impacting a minority population in District 4. Therefore the poll results would show the same results as we get in the election, the highly partisan officials will drum up their base, and the vote would just show the same information we already know.

Thank you

Kaitlin Fraer

Concerned Citizen