

James La  
705 Hendrix Avenue  
Gaithersburg, MD, 20878

Written Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill HB 1202  
Amendments Convention Called Under Article V of the U.S. Constitution - Delegation to the  
Convention

To the House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee

Dear Committee Chair Anne Healey and the Honorable Committee Members,

My name is James La, and I have lived in Montgomery County for most of my adult life. I am also one of the Boat People refugees who left Vietnam after the Fall of Saigon to escape communism.

We made it to East Malaysia, but hundreds of thousands of others didn't. We lived in a refugee camp for 14 months without electricity or running water, and although we asked for asylum, Malaysia and many other countries refused to accept us. Eventually, the First Baptist Church of Erwin, Tennessee, brought us to the United States and helped me learn English and go to school without any help from the government.

In 1949, my parents left China on foot to escape the communist takeover there. Then, the same thing happened in Vietnam, and they risked everything to escape communism a second time, this time with me. Imagine a government with the power to change the national currency twice in less than three years. We woke up one morning, and everything my parents had worked for was gone, including their life savings and their business. There was no food for weeks, Chinese Vietnamese were being imprisoned, we couldn't travel more than 100 miles, we couldn't criticize the government, and everyone used bicycles because there was no gasoline for cars.

I see the same thing happening here. Our government is becoming too powerful, much like the Central governments in Vietnam and China. I ask you to pass this bill, so Maryland will be prepared to join the conversation to help put our government in order so this won't happen here.