



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10, 2024

The Honorable Chair Healey, Vice Chair Holmes, and members of the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee:

House Bill 203- Favorable

This bill is about the citizens of Maryland being sovereign over the General Assembly. They vote for us; they should also be the ones to draw the districts. The term “gerrymander” originated in 1812 when Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry signed a bill redrawing state senate districts to benefit his political party. One district was so oddly shaped that it was said to resemble a salamander. The Boston Gazette published a satirical political cartoon depicting the district as a monster with claws, wings, and a dragon-like head—calling it the “Gerry-mander.” The name stuck, and the practice of manipulating electoral boundaries for political advantage has been called gerrymandering ever since.

To date the practice of politicians self-perpetuating their power in legislative authority is in the same unjust and undemocratic state it was in when Governor Gerry mastered the practice. The bill gives us a historical chance to fix and injustice by being bipartisan for the good of all citizens regardless of party affiliation.

After each census, 188 citizens divided in county delegations based upon population shall be elected on non-partisan ballots to convene in Annapolis for drawing both Congressional and General Assembly legislative districts. Small counties will be guaranteed a minimum 3-member delegation as others who have larger populations will have larger delegations. Example: Montgomery 29, Baltimore City 14, Howard 12, Kent 3, Garrett 3, etc.

We possess the political science genius to solve gerrymandering, which plagues all states. We can establish the template for which all others can follow. The Supreme Court, which turned down my 2012 redistricting challenge, has made it clear that this political science conundrum falls under our legislative duty to fix, and we can do it by simply giving the authority to draw the districts over to the true sovereign, “The People”. Whoever draws the legislative districts is truly the sovereign of a state and at present it is not the People, but the leadership of the legislature and that is why gerrymandering exists. Therefore, the only true political science solution is making the citizens of Maryland sovereign over the legislature as it should be. Not only do they elect us, but they must also draw our districts. Legislators drawing their own districts is about as intellectually equivalent as a writer editing their own work or a welder inspecting their own welding. How many of you want welders inspecting their own welds on bridges you drive over or in jets you fly in? The answer is none. It all goes back to the genius of Madison and Hamilton;

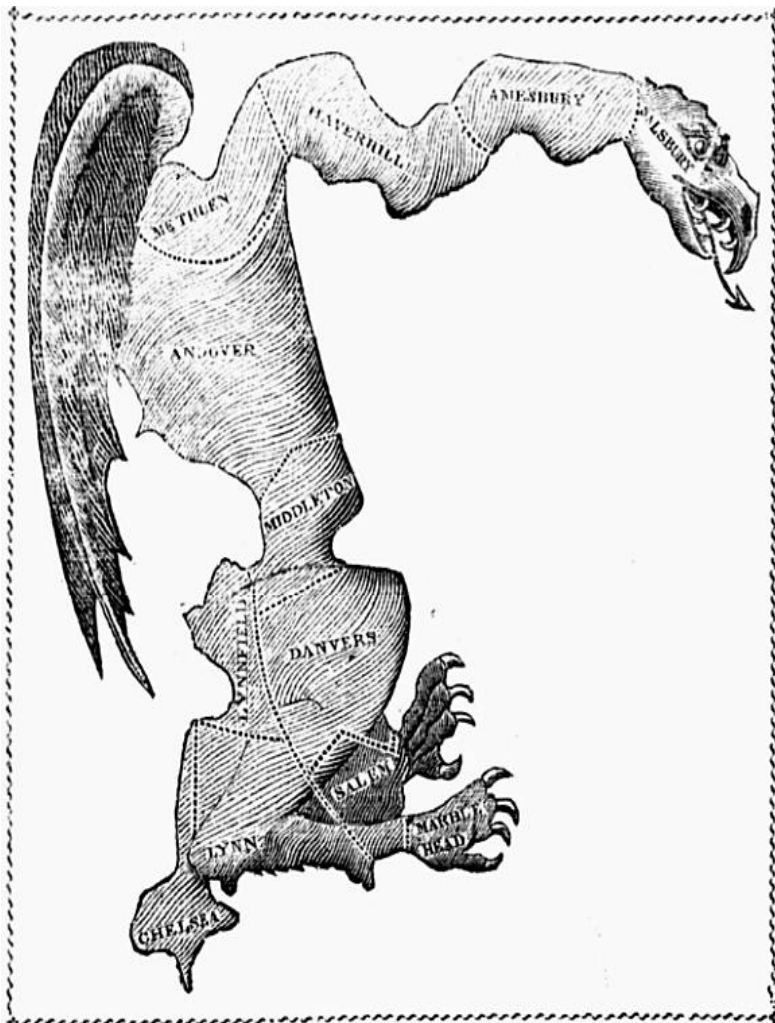
separation of power with the true sovereign, The People, being the ultimate arbitrators of redistricting.

I urge the committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 203.

Sincerely,



Delegate Christopher Eric Bouchat



Satirical political cartoon depicted in the Boston Gazette in 1813 named the "Gerry-mander"