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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

For most of my life, I've believed that the stories we tell about where we come from shape the people we become. As a writer, I've spent years thinking about how words, and music carry the spirit of a place from one generation to the next. My name is Cory Lyman. I'm 37 years old, a Baltimore resident, and someone who has spent many summers working with young people. Those experiences are why I believe "*The Heart of Maryland*," written by Jayla Elise, should be recognized as the official state song of Maryland.

Maryland is more than a place on a map. From Baltimore to small towns across the state, our identity is shaped by the people who live here and the values we share. A state song should reflect that living identity and speak to the future as much as the past.

Working with children has shown me how much young people want to feel connected. Music has a powerful ability to create that connection. Recognizing "The Heart of Maryland" as our official state song would send a powerful message to the next generation: that Maryland's identity is alive, evolving, and shaped by their voices as well.

For the communities I've worked with, I see this bringing Maryland forward. I believe this song deserves that honor, and SB0191 should pass.

Best,

Cory Lyman

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