

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Chair, Senator Brian J. Feldman  
Vice Chair, Senator Cheryl C. Kagan  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis MD 21401

**Regarding: Support of SB191**

March 10, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 191 (SB191), State Designations – State Song - “The Heart of Maryland”.

“The Heart of Maryland” was written by 22 year-old singer-songwriter Jayla Elise of Cambridge, Maryland, formerly of Prince George’s County, for the MD Two Fifty Commission. Jayla first sang at a Commission meeting in Cambridge in April 2025, and again at a Commission meeting in August 2025 in Hagerstown. Jayla also wrote a national song for the 250th, “America’s Calling” and “Dorchester Dreams” which is now the official song of Dorchester County. Jayla has sung “The Heart of Maryland” at minor league baseball stadiums throughout Maryland, in schools where she is also inspiring interest in young Marylanders in the 250th, and at many community events including the Waterfowl Festival in Easton last November.

In this Semiquincentennial year, the MD Two Fifty Commission is leading an inclusive statewide commemoration throughout Maryland, guided by Executive Order 01.01.2024.29, with the themes of history, civics, and service. Jayla’s words in “The Heart of Maryland” are very much in sync with the intended unity and togetherness of the Semiquincentennial, with the natural beauty and spirit of people throughout the state of Maryland, and with the focus on our future.

Maryland has not had a state song since 2021 and is one of just two states (the other is New Jersey) without a state song. Maryland needs a state song, and I cannot think of anything more appropriate than Jayla Elise’s “The Heart of Maryland”. I encourage a favorable vote on SB191.

Sincerely,  
The Honorable Parris N. Glendening  
Chair, MD Two Fifty Commission