

TESTIMONY HB2100

TO: Joint House and Senate

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Senate President William Ferguson and Speaker Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk

Position: Strongly Oppose

Dear Delegates and State Senators of the Special Session

Many Republican lawmakers have already argued that the proposed maps are designed to eliminate the state's only GOP-held congressional seat. This mid-cycle gerrymandering disproportionately benefits one party, undermines the legitimacy of the process and erodes public trust, not to mention disenfranchising approximately 1/3 of the State's voters. Courts have already struck down Maryland maps in the past, and pushing through another aggressive re-draw could lead to costly litigation and further instability. Wasting even more public money on court battles when Maryland already has an outrageous deficit just doesn't make sense. This push to eliminate the only Republican representative in Congress is nothing more than a partisan power grab.

Even leaders within the majority party have already warned the effort is dangerous. Senate President Bill Ferguson has opposed such legislation in the recent General Assembly session presented as HB448. When leaders in their own party opposed the plan, it becomes obvious that the proposal is a pure partisan effort to control Maryland. Maryland currently has eight congressional seats, with only one currently held by a Republican. With 31.5% of Maryland voters registered as Republican, Maryland should have at least 2 and possibly 3 members in Congress. Yet, Democrats seek to eliminate the one Republican member currently in office. Is that fair to Maryland citizens?

Changing the Maryland Constitution to "clarify" that the current redistricting requirements and limitations "do NOT apply to Congressional districts" is curious because in 2021 Judge Battaglia declared that the requirements and limitation **DO**, in fact, apply stating the plan was unconstitutional. Advancing this proposal to the November ballot despite strong public opposition demonstrates total disregard for constituent concerns about fairness and will surely draw national attention to Maryland's Democrat controlled General Assembly.

Does that help Maryland Democrats achieve their goals? I think not! It just makes them look foolish and corrupt. **The Maryland constitution states that districts should be – concise, compact and contiguous areas nearly equal populations – (crossing the Chesapeake Bay is hardly contiguous or compact!), using natural boundaries, maintaining county boundaries – all of which make sense! How about following the law and creating districts that allow voters to chose their elected officials rather than politicians that choose their voters.**

In conclusion, the redistricting push outlined in HB2100 will certainly will surely be worded n such a way that favors its passing – **thus deceiving the voters as to its true intention**. Voters already know this effort is a pet project of Governor Moore and is **not even supported by many Democrats**. The public sees this effort as highly partisan, secretive, very unpopular, and that it contradicts Maryland's Constitutional guidelines. The Governor should abandon this effort entirely. **PLEASE VOTE AGAINST HB2100**

Respectfully submitted,

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