

Good afternoon Senators, Delegates, and thank you so much for the opportunity to speak.

My name is Hunter Petit, and I am a private citizen. I'm a proud lifelong Marylander — and even prouder to be from gorgeous Prince George's County. And when I say proud, I mean I will tell anyone that I went to elementary, middle, high school, and college — all in the County.

Being here in Annapolis is personal to me. It was on the grounds of this General Assembly that I first fell in love with politics and public service as a Senate Page. So seeing many of you here today—leaders I grew up watching and learning from—makes this moment especially meaningful.

Which is why today is painful.

I'm not here to reminisce. I'm here to ask you, with immense love for the state we all call home: **please do not rewrite Maryland's Constitution to make gerrymandering easier.**

We've been down this road before. Maryland once had some of the most gerrymandered congressional districts in America. It was a national embarrassment. I was proud when our state began moving away from that legacy. Please don't send us backwards.

Yes, Maryland is a deeply Democratic state. And yes, other states are drawing maps to entrench their power. But I urge you — **you cannot defend democracy while actively undermining it.**

Your responsibility is to the people of Maryland—not to national political leaders. You swore an oath to represent all Marylanders.

That includes Republican voters. They are not your enemy. In fact, many would argue Maryland has more to lose than almost any other state from swings in federal policy. Presidents come and go. But for a state whose economy is so deeply tied to the federal government, it would be unwise to ensure Maryland never has anyone on the other side of the aisle fighting for us in Washington. If you want the economic disruption we've experienced over the last two years to become a recurring event every four or eight years, this is one way to guarantee it.

And here's the reality: creating a more aggressive partisan gerrymander in Maryland doesn't just dilute Republican votes—it requires cracking Black communities across Prince George's County, Charles County, Baltimore City, and beyond. As a data analyst, I'm here to tell you that's not speculation. It's simply the math.

For a state that proudly calls itself a leader in Black political representation, that should be unacceptable.

You are being told that we have to “fight fire with fire.” But **our American democracy is not a fire. It is not something you torch in flames just because someone else lit a match.** It is something you protect — even when it's inconvenient, difficult, or unpopular.

So I'm asking you: please don't rewrite our Constitution for a temporary political advantage.

Please: **Do not disenfranchise our Republican Marylanders.**

Do not destroy the voices of our Black communities.

And do not let our state be remembered for choosing power over principle.

God bless you all and thank you so much for your time and consideration.