



NAACP

Howard County Branch

#7020

Willie Flowers- President; NAACP Howard County Branch #7020

Committee: House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee, in joint hearing with the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Hearing Date: Monday, August 3, 2026 — Special Session

Position: Favorable

Good afternoon, Chairs and members of the Committees. My name is Willie Flowers and I am here representing the NAACP Howard County Branch.

For over a century, the NAACP has fought to ensure that every Black Marylander and every person of color has a seat at the table of democracy. We stand today in **strong support of House Bill 2100**. Redistricting is not merely a technical exercise in drawing lines; it is the fundamental process by which we determine whether marginalized communities will have a meaningful voice in the halls of Congress or whether that voice will be systematically muted. HB 2100 asks Maryland voters to decide, once and for all, how future congressional maps will be drawn and reviewed — and we believe that decision belongs with the people.

The NAACP supports HB 2100 because it puts a durable, voter-approved framework in place for the redistricting cycles ahead. This constitutional amendment would clarify that the compact and contiguous district requirements in Maryland's Constitution apply to General Assembly districts — not to congressional districts — removing the ambiguity that has too often been exploited to delay or derail maps that protect minority representation.

HB 2100 also works to move Maryland in the right direction on judicial accountability. Rather than leaving legal challenges to be litigated after a map is already in effect, this bill requires the Supreme Court of Maryland to review future congressional districting plans *before* they take effect. For our members, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure: resolving legal questions up front protects the integrity of minority-opportunity districts and spares communities of color the disruption and uncertainty of maps being challenged, and potentially struck down, in the middle of an election cycle.

We also recognize the broader context. Across the nation, we are witnessing a coordinated assault on the Voting Rights Act. When other states move to suppress minority voices through mid-cycle redistricting, Maryland has a moral and civic

obligation to build lasting guardrails — not just a one-time map, but a process that will hold up for the next commission and the next Legislature, long after this session ends.

We further note that HB 2100 places this decision directly before Maryland voters on the November ballot, and that any resulting changes to the redistricting process would not apply before the 2028 election. This is the right approach: it gives the public the final word on how their own representation will be determined, rather than leaving that question to be settled by legislators or the courts alone.

Democracy is strongest when it is inclusive, and it is most durable when the rules are settled before the next fight begins. HB 2100 is a step toward a more inclusive Maryland where the 'will of the people' is not just a slogan, but a lived reality for every citizen, regardless of their zip code or background.

On behalf of the NAACP Howard County Branch, we urge these Committees to protect the progress we have made and to issue a favorable report on House Bill 2100. Thank you.