

Heather Olsen
Hyattsville, MD
Testimony Against HB2100

Last November, I and many others spoke before the redistricting commission, arguing against the mid-cycle partisan Gerrymandering you were then considering. I noted that the proposed changes would force polling places to be changed, leading to unnecessary voter confusion. I pointed out that the reprehensible efforts of other states to engage in mid-cycle partisan Gerrymandering did not justify Maryland doing the same, because two wrongs don't make a right, and I noted that courts had overturned these efforts in other states, and the same might happen here. In January, I repeated these concerns to a committee of the House of Delegates.

Now, instead of abandoning your efforts to redraw Maryland's congressional districts in a way that would be likely to be challenged in court, you are seeking to make it more difficult for citizens to bring such challenges.

We all know that Gerrymandering is bad for democracy. We all know that limiting the ability of citizens to bring legal challenges against decisions of legislatures that infringe their rights is bad. You justify doing this on the basis of the need to counter what your counterparts in other states are doing. They justify what they are doing on the basis of the need to counter what you are doing. The cumulative effect of this, however, is a downward spiral that weakens democracy, erodes rights, and leaves citizens angry and alienated from our political system. I urge you to vote no on HB2100.