

Testimony of Sallie B. Taylor
regarding House Bill 2100 Constitutional Amendment

Dear Senator Feldman, Chair and Senator Kagan Vice Chair
and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
&
Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair and Delegate Kerr, Vice Chair
and member of the Government, Labor, and Election Committee

I am opposed to House Bill 2100 which will enshrine a double standard for drawing state and federal election district maps. While the U.S. Constitution and federal law undisputedly establish the criteria for drawing congressional maps, state law and lawmakers retain a significant role in shaping the redistricting process within those established parameters.

I urge the General Assembly to embrace the high principles embodied in Article III, Section 4¹ and recognize that they should be equally applied to both state and congressional redistricting processes. Applying the same standards to all election districts would protect minority communities and communities of interest, ensure that citizens have a meaningful opportunity to exercise their right to choose their representatives, strengthen public confidence in our electoral system and establish Maryland as a national leader in fair and principled redistricting. Just as Maryland has long been remembered as a beacon of religious tolerance, it has the opportunity to become a national beacon for election integrity by setting principled and fair standards that other states can follow.

The recent Supreme Court decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* has been cited as one of the primary reasons this extraordinary session has been called. President Ferguson said, “Now, the rules have changed. The Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, and Southern legislatures are already using that ruling to wipe out minority districts.”² If race can no longer serve as a controlling factor in redistricting decisions, then geography and respect for political boundaries become even more important tools for protecting minority communities. Applying the principles set forth in Article III, Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution to both state and congressional districts reinforce those protections by preserving communities of interest and respecting established political boundaries. Without these safeguards, minority communities may become increasingly vulnerable to being divided and their voting strength diluted for partisan purposes.

The other primary reason that this special session has been called is to address the 2022 redistricting cycle which marked the first time the state constitutional principles were applied by a court to the congressional redistricting process. And now in 2026, Marylanders are wondering why standards that have successfully governed state legislative districts and that are fully

¹ The Article reads: “Each legislative district shall consist of adjoining territory, be compact in form, and of substantially equal population. Due regard shall be given to natural boundaries and the boundaries of political subdivisions.”)

² Democracy Docket, Maryland Democrats prepare special session to counter GOP gerrymanders, send redistricting to voters By Yunior Rivas June 15, 2026 <https://www.democracymocket.com/news-alerts/maryland-democrats-prepare-special-session-to-counter-gop-gerrymanders/>

consistent with federal constitutional requirements, should not also govern congressional districts. Even if Article III, Section 4 was originally intended to apply only to state legislative redistricting, the principles it embodies have now become part of the public discussion about fairness in representation. Like the principle of equal population, respect for natural boundaries and political subdivisions are principles that resonate with Maryland citizens. They should not be viewed as standards reserved for one type of election district while disregarded for another. Marylanders deserve a consistent, transparent, and fair approach to drawing every election district.

Do we want to return to a time when voters did not know which congressional district that they lived in or who represented them in the United States House of Representatives? In 2012, Maryland made national headlines for having the most gerrymandered congressional district in the nation. Congressional District 3 meandered through Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, Anne Arundel County, and Montgomery County in a shape that made it nearly impossible for citizens to identify their own district, much less to build a cohesive community of interest and effectively engage with their elected representatives on issues that matter to them.

Administratively, an increasingly complex election system undermines voter confidence in the most fundamental way citizens influence their government: by casting a ballot. Applying the standards of Article III Section 4 to both state and federal election districts will simplify our election process by simplifying the ballot itself. In 2022, according to the Maryland State Board of Elections own report, they *calculate* (failing to report the exact number) that there “were about 2,077 ballot styles and multiple versions of each ballot style.”³ (In primary elections, there are even more ballot styles). Every additional district split and every unnecessary departure from county and municipal boundaries increases the complexity of election administration.

The 2026 Primary Election demonstrated just how costly that complexity has become. Approximately 447,000 ballots had to be remailed⁴ because voters were sent ballots with the wrong ballot style. While an internal review has blamed vendor print errors, the sheer number of ballot styles and the complexity of assigning the correct ballot to each voter made the problem far more difficult to detect and correct. This led to voter confusion, additional expense for taxpayers, and a loss of public confidence in the administration of our elections resulting in a very low voter participation. Congressional districts that respect political subdivision boundaries will reduce election administration complexity and help restore public confidence in the integrity of our elections.

In the end, we the people of Maryland deserve to be represented by elected officials who reflect our communities, interests, and governing priorities. Maryland has a long and unfortunate

³ Maryland State Board of Elections 2022 General Election Report, https://elections.maryland.gov/press_room/documents/GG22_2022%20General%20Election%20Report_Final%20with%20Cover.pdf

⁴ Maryland Matters, Duplicate replacement ballot raises new questions, Election advocate renews calls for independent review of ballot printing, By [Bryan P. Sears](#)-June 9, 2026

history of partisan gerrymandering that has too often undermined public confidence in our electoral system.

We deserve better.

Marylanders deserve to have the principles enshrined in Article III, Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution applied consistently to both state and federal election districts. Rushing a constitutional amendment onto the November ballot without sufficient deliberation is an insult to us. Marylanders across the political spectrum are increasingly concerned that amending the state constitution for short-term political advantage sets a dangerous precedent. Constitutional amendments should be timeless, reflecting enduring principles.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 2100. Also, it is my hope that when the newly elected General Assembly is seated, it will undertake a thoughtful and deliberate review of Maryland's redistricting laws to ensure that the high standards embodied in Article III, Section 4 are applied consistently to both congressional and state legislative districts. Maryland should lead the nation in fair, principled, and transparent redistricting not by creating two different sets of rules, but by holding all election districts to the same standard.

Sincerely,
Sallie B. Taylor
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