

## Testimony on HB 496

### Government, Labor and Elections Committee

#### Election Law - Unaffiliated Voters - Open Primary Elections

#### Position: Unfavorable

My name is Julia Nichols, and as a citizen of St. Mary's County, I strongly urge the Committee to NOT to pass HB 496.

While I agree that changes are needed in the two-party system in our country, the Democratic and Republican Party primaries are there so that the members of those Parties can determine which candidates they would like to put forward for their party. It does not make sense for the Parties to allow people unaffiliated with their group to help make decisions about what their group wants.

This is how membership works – if you want to have a say in what the group is deciding, you need to become a member of the group. If it is that important to you to be unaffiliated with any particular Party, then you need to be okay with the Parties choosing their own candidates to put forward onto the ballot. If you are hoping to change the two-party system, Ranked Choice Voting is a better way to go.

I strongly and respectfully urge an **unfavorable** vote on HB 496.