

This Testimony pertains to the opposition of Maryland HB 2100 / SB 2100, “An Act concerning Election Districts – General Assembly and Representatives in Congress”.

My name is Vicki Gallagher, I am representing myself as a concerned citizen, and this is my testimony.

To the leaders of Maryland, to the members of the General Assembly, and to every citizen who still believes that democracy belongs to the people:

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment being considered during the August 2026 special session concerning congressional redistricting standards. I write with deep conviction, profound concern, and an unshakable belief that the right to fair representation is not a bargaining chip, not a partisan trophy, and not something to be manipulated in the heat of national political warfare. The decision by Maryland Democratic leaders to call lawmakers back to Annapolis for a special session on midcycle congressional redistricting demands a serious and passionate response, because what is at stake is larger than one map, one election, or one party’s advantage.

Maryland deserves a redistricting process rooted in transparency, constitutional integrity, and the public good. If lawmakers believe the state’s rules must be clarified after court decisions created uncertainty, then they must make that case openly, plainly, and honestly before the voters. They must not hide behind procedural urgency or partisan urgency. They must not ask Marylanders to accept constitutional change as a matter of political convenience. They must prove that their proposal strengthens democracy rather than merely strengthens their own hand.

The people of this state are not blind to the moment we are living in. Across the country, partisan gerrymandering has become a weapon. Voting rights have been weakened. Courts have shifted the rules. Political actors in other states have drawn lines with ruthless precision to secure power before a single ballot is cast. Maryland cannot pretend those realities do not exist. But neither can Maryland answer one democratic injury with another. If our leaders claim to defend democracy, then their method must be democratic too.

That is why the promise that voters will have the final say matters. It is not a detail; it is the heart of the matter. No constitutional amendment should be treated as an insider’s maneuver. It should be placed directly before the people with clear language, full public explanation, and enough time for every voter to understand what is being changed and why. Marylanders should not be handed a slogan. They should be given the truth.

And here is the truth as plainly as I can state it: representation belongs to voters, not politicians. Congressional districts should not be drawn to silence communities, protect incumbents, punish dissent, or manufacture predetermined outcomes. They should reflect the people of Maryland in all their diversity, geography, interests, and voices. A state that prides itself on civic responsibility should not settle for a process that makes citizens feel like spectators while power rearranges itself behind closed doors.

So I say to Maryland's Democratic leaders: if this special session is truly about protecting voting rights, then protect them in the daylight. If it is truly about fair representation, then build a framework that the public can trust even when it does not benefit your party. If it is truly about giving voters the final decision, then honor voters with clarity, humility, and respect by allowing more than fifty hand-selected individuals to provide live testimony at the special session.

Maryland does not need a race to the bottom. Maryland needs leadership worthy of its people. We can acknowledge the threat posed by extreme partisan redistricting elsewhere while still insisting that our own response meet a higher standard. We can defend democracy without distorting it. We can prepare for changing legal realities without surrendering the principle that voters choose their representatives, not the other way around.

This special session must not become a symbol of political entitlement. It must become a test of democratic character. Let lawmakers debate. Let the public scrutinize and participate in a meaningful way. Let the voters decide, by being thoroughly engaged throughout the process, not just left to be presented propaganda for a few months before voting on a constitutional change that is written in such a way that most voters will not understand. And let every person in Annapolis remember that constitutional power is not theirs to possess; it is theirs to steward.

If Maryland is going to change the rules, then Maryland must do so with courage, transparency, and fidelity to the people. Anything less would betray the very democracy this action claims to defend.