

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on HB488. This topic - congressional district boundaries - has motivated me to participate because I believe gerrymandering, by both parties, is the root evil cause of the current state of politics, which is best characterized as a winner take all environment, where compromise with the quote "enemy" is uniformly applauded as unacceptable and a sign of mutual failure.

Yet, that's not how we all live our lives. Across the country, we're 50% Democrat and 50% Republican and for most of our history, we've thrived on middle-of-the-road compromise. We are quickly optimizing this out of our system through bills like this one now being considered.

Do we get better candidates from districts that are 60-75% populated by a single party. Do the other 25-40% have any voice or influence in elections? We more and more embrace diversity in our daily lives, both at work and at home and in our neighborhoods, yet this system seeks to squelch political diversity. Is this the one case where non-diversity leads to better solutions? Of course not.

If a politician has to fight for votes from both parties, they'll probably be fighting with better ideas that will likely come from better skilled, better motivated, better prepared candidates. This ultimately delivers more effective representatives - for both their party and the populace.

If you know what you're doing is not the best you can do for these districts, Maryland and the country as a whole, then please stand up and say "You know, we can do better - so let's do better." We're supposed to elect politicians to independently use their brains - this is the nature of our Representative Democracy - yet more and more, in fact, almost exclusively, both Democratic and Republican representatives are lemmings to their parties, providing no independent thinking or efforts. I doubt there a single representative that will vote for this this bill that honestly feels this change is a good, positive change that will be beneficial to all (or any) citizenry. Rather, they universally know this set of changes is contrived exclusively to benefit a single party. Is this how any representative is supposed to think and act? Of course not. How about applying a basic test when thinking about supporting such bills - "would my affirmative vote make my high school civics teacher proud?"

It's just a side show to even discuss the details of this proposed set of changes, which are just part of a sinister game. Even though we all know this is just a non-creative tit for tat reaction to what's happening elsewhere, why can't we in Maryland be leaders for meaningful, positive change and not sink to that level? What if we actually stood up and said "NO! This is not the America that we know most American's wants, so we're going

to help lead to a better place.” History is always kind to those that stand up with courage to try to make our state and country a better place. Please demonstrate that courage.

Of course the probability of this happening in Maryland is near zero as there’s not a single more obedient, subservient, non-independent thinking set of lemming representatives anywhere in the country than with Maryland’s majority party. My disgust with both parties grows daily. It’s not hard to figure out why with actions such as this.