

Valerie Ferrell, Cecil County – Opposition to HB488

ORAL TESTIMONY: My name is Valerie Ferrell; I'm from Cecil County. I have to highlight something I've not heard anyone talk about yet (I'm sure because this bill and hearing has moved with abnormal speed, altered rules, and short notice): HB488 proposes an amendment and 2 "additions" to the Maryland Constitution. However, our Maryland Constitution Article 14, requires each amendment to be presented in a separate bill. That makes HB488 on its face unconstitutional. There are MANY problems with this bill and this redistricting proposal process that you'll read in my written testimony and I'm sure you're hearing from others, but first and foremost, we need to comply with Maryland's Constitution and separate out those sections into separate bills. Thank you.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Governor Moore said he wants Maryland to have "fair maps." However, this mid-cycle redistricting attempt does not reflect fairness – it is not impartial, nor does it conform with established rules.

- Is it fair to Marylanders to rush through a redistricting map drawing process in 2 months during the major holiday season of Christmas and New Year?
- Is it fair to hold the majority of "transparent" meetings on a Friday at 4 pm, during holiday season?
- Is it fair to never hold an in-person meeting about something that will affect the future of Maryland?
- Is it fair for that Commission to vote on the final map proposal during a closed-door session?
- Is it fair for a "bipartisan" commission to have 4 Democrats and only 1 Republican?
- Is it fair to schedule a bill on a Friday for a hearing on Monday, and then move it to Tuesday with very short notice over a weekend?
- Is it fair for the minority party to have to ASK the majority party Speaker to allow citizens the ability to speak on the issue through public testimony?
- Is it fair to change the day and time of the hearing 24 hours before the hearing?
- Is it fair to ignore the Maryland Constitution that demands "due regard" be "given to natural boundaries"?
- Is it fair to take precious limited time away from our lawmakers during this session to spend it on a bill where the stated intent is a retaliatory response to federal partisan politics?
- Is it fair to try to silence people who live in 1/3 of Maryland's lands by redrawing a map to reach across water? It looks like Pinocchio's nose growing across the Bay.