

Written Testimony of Peter E. Spaulding, Resident of St. Mary's County, Maryland

On this 25<sup>th</sup> day of January 2026 I rise to speak against HB 0488 concerning the proposed redistricting of the current General Assembly and Representatives in Congress Election Districts as established after the 2020 census via SB 1012 in March 2022. The current plan was made law after the 2021 plan was rejected by the courts due to unconstitutional partisan gerrymander (Szeliga v. Lamone, April 2022). This current plan identified in HB 0488 follows the same gerrymandered path as the 2021 plan and thus must be rejected by the legislature.

Article III, Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution states: "*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.*" The proposed plan seeks to add territory to Congressional District 01 that does not meet the constitutional requirement of a natural boundary and is being added with the sole and express intent of changing the partisan make up of the district. Each of those two impediments bring this redistricting plan into violation of Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution and will no doubt be rejected by the courts should the legislature decide to pass it.

In addition to the aforementioned impediments, I question the basis upon which any effort to change the current districts which were signed into law and have been accepted by the courts and the voters of the State of Maryland. There has been no official census since 2020 that would beg the need for such a change. Lacking that, this plan violates the intent of Section 5 of the Maryland Constitution which dictates that a new plan be prepared, "Following each decennial census of the United States..."

I ask that the assembly reject this effort to gerrymander and reject HB 0488 or any similar bill that seeks to change the current plan for election districts.