

## **Written Testimony in Opposition to HB488**

### **Position: Oppose**

Members of the Committee,

My name is Sondra Kefauver, and I am a Maryland voter. I am here in opposition to HB488 because this bill feels like one more step toward telling certain voters that their voices simply don't matter.

Voting is supposed to mean something. It's supposed to be how everyday people—parents, workers, retirees, small business owners—have a say in the direction of their state. But bills like HB488 make many of us feel like the outcome is already decided before we ever step into a voting booth.

When laws are structured in a way that consistently shuts out minority viewpoints, voters notice. We feel it. We stop believing our participation matters. And when people stop believing that, democracy starts to break down.

This bill may not say “remove Republican voters,” but the effect is clear to those of us living it: fewer choices, fewer competitive elections, and fewer reasons to believe our representatives are accountable to all Marylanders—not just the majority party. That is deeply discouraging.

This isn't about protecting politicians. It's about protecting people. It's about protecting the right of voters to be represented—even when their views aren't popular, even when they're outnumbered. A healthy democracy does not fear dissent. It welcomes it.

When competition disappears, complacency sets in. When accountability fades, voters lose their leverage. And when voters lose their leverage, government stops listening.

I worry about the message HB488 sends, especially to younger voters: that engagement doesn't matter, that the system is stacked, that some voices are worth less than others. That is not the Maryland I want to live in, and it is not the example we should be setting.

I urge you to oppose HB488—not for the sake of one party, but for the sake of fairness, trust, and the basic promise that every Maryland voter deserves a meaningful voice in their government.

Thank you for hearing me and for remembering who this process is supposed to serve.

Respectfully submitted,

Sondra Kefauver

Knoxville, Washington County