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Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

I strongly oppose HB 488, a partisan mid-decade redistricting bill that appears rushed and designed to gerrymander Maryland's eight congressional districts for Democratic advantage. This proposal, influenced by Gov. Wes Moore's advisory commission, would redraw lines to potentially secure all eight seats for Democrats, eliminating the state's sole Republican-held district (the 1st, represented by Rep. Andy Harris).

Key reasons for my opposition:

1. Partisan Gerrymandering to Suppress Republican Representation

The map would dismantle the 1st District by splitting the Eastern Shore and incorporating Democratic strongholds in Anne Arundel and Howard counties (e.g., parts of Columbia). This dilutes conservative votes, making Republican wins unfeasible and shifting Maryland's delegation from 7-1 Democrat/Republican to 8-0 Democrat. As a resident of Pikesville in District 2, I see this as an attack on balanced representation, silencing hundreds of thousands of Republican voters and entrenching one-party control.

2. Flawed Process and Poor Timing

Introduced on January 23 amid a declared winter storm emergency, the bill's hearing is set for Monday with minimal notice, limiting public engagement during dangerous conditions. This "rigged" approach bypasses standard protocols—mid-decade changes should only address legal mandates, not exploit political timing or national shifts.

3. Erosion of Democratic Principles and Public Faith

Redistricting must prioritize compact districts, communities of interest, and competitiveness, not predetermined partisan outcomes. HB 488 risks costly lawsuits, as with past maps, and undermines trust in elections. Gov. Moore's emphasis on democracy rings hollow here—this prioritizes power over fairness.

I urge the Committee to reject HB 488. Maintain the existing map or commit to a transparent, bipartisan process post-census that serves all Marylanders. Advancing this would disenfranchise Republicans and compromise electoral integrity.

Thank you for your consideration. Please enter this testimony into the record.

Sincerely,



Susan Schuman