Maryland's Redistricting Push: When the Map Tells the Story

Maryland is pushing forward with mid-cycle congressional redistricting in a way that should concern anyone who values transparency, coherence, and public trust.

This effort is unfolding **outside the normal post-census redistricting cycle**, and the process itself has already drawn criticism from within the Governor's own party. Senate President Bill Ferguson publicly warned that the outcome appeared *"pre-ordained"* and criticized the lack of transparency after the Governor's Redistricting Advisory Commission held a **closed, unannounced meeting** that was neither publicly noticed nor livestreamed, where key decisions were advanced.

That alone should give Marylanders pause.

What followed only deepens those concerns.

The commission moved at remarkable speed, scheduling **public hearings immediately after a major snowstorm**, predictably limiting participation. Recommendations were pushed forward despite open disagreement from senior Democratic leadership, including warnings about legal risk and public credibility. Lawmakers then rushed to take up the proposal, even as critics—inside and outside Annapolis—questioned whether meaningful public input had ever truly been part of the plan.

But the most striking red flag may be the map itself.

Under the proposed configuration, **parts of Howard County—including areas of Columbia—are placed in the same congressional district as Ocean City**. These communities are separated by more than 120 miles, have entirely different economies, transportation systems, and regional priorities, and share little in common beyond being within Maryland's borders.

Howard County residents are part of a densely populated, suburban region shaped by commuting patterns tied to Baltimore and Washington. Ocean City is a seasonal coastal resort town with a tourism-driven economy and infrastructure concerns unique to the Eastern Shore. To suggest that these areas constitute a coherent "community of interest" strains credulity.

This isn't subtle. When a map links Columbia and Ocean City, it doesn't look like representation—it looks like **outcome-driven line drawing**.

Redistricting is one of the most powerful tools in a democracy. It determines who votes with whom, which voices are amplified, and how representation functions for years. That power demands **maximum transparency and restraint**, not:

- Closed-door meetings

- Minimal public notice

- Accelerated timelines

- Or hearings held under conditions that suppress participation

Governor Moore has framed this effort as a matter of fairness. But fairness isn't asserted—it's demonstrated through process. When meetings aren't public, when decisions appear rushed, and when district lines connect communities with no meaningful shared interests, skepticism isn't partisan. It's reasonable.

Maryland is already grappling with serious challenges—affordability, rising energy costs, and growing distrust in Annapolis after last session's fiscal decisions. Choosing this moment to fast-track redistricting, while sidelining transparency, only reinforces the perception that political advantage is taking precedence over public confidence.

This isn't about party affiliation.
It's about legitimacy.
And right now, the process—and the map—are telling a troubling story.

Marylanders deserve better.

Sincerely,

MacGyver Biniak
Howard County