



Tc4health@gmail.com
www.qualequityaccess.com

January 23, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Healey, Vice Chair Holmes, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Bill: House Bill 482 – Constitutional Amendment – Legislative and Congressional Redistricting and Apportionment Commission (Fair Districts for Maryland Act)

Committee: Rules and Executive Nominations **Position:** UNFAVORABLE

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the mother of two disabled children, a pediatric nurse practitioner, and the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC a consultancy that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I understand the value of my vote and that of every citizen that resides in Maryland and am motivated to submit this letter to protect that value. I am writing to oppose House Bill 482. While this legislation is presented as a mechanism for "fair districts," a review of the text reveals it to be a consolidation of political power that insulates legislative leadership from accountability and removes critical checks and balances. In a time where citizens across the country are concerned about government overreach and the entrenchment of political elites, this bill moves Maryland in the wrong direction.

1. Institutionalizing Political Control, Not Independence True redistricting reform requires independence from the very politicians whose districts are being drawn. HB 482 does the opposite. It establishes a 10-member commission where **80% of the seats** are controlled directly by legislative leadership .

- The Commission includes the Senate President, Speaker of the House, and Minority Leaders, plus four members directly appointed by them .
- By allowing the "fox to guard the henhouse," this bill ensures that future elections are decided in backroom deal-making sessions by incumbents, rather than by voters at the ballot box. This is not independence; it is incumbency protection codified into the Constitution.

2. Neutering the Executive Branch The bill creates an illusion of bipartisan checks by allowing the Governor to appoint two members. However, Section 8-7A-05(A)(1) effectively strips this power by requiring the "**unanimous approval**" of two separate legislative committees for these appointments .

- This grants a single partisan legislator veto power over the Governor's choices, ensuring that only "safe" or politically convenient candidates are seated. This fundamentally disrupts the balance of power between the Executive and Legislative branches.



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3. Creating an Unaccountable "Shadow" Legal Authority Perhaps most concerning is the removal of the Attorney General's oversight. The bill amends Article V, Section 3 to explicitly **strip the Attorney General of the authority** to represent the State in redistricting cases .

- Instead, the Commission is empowered to "hire staff, attorneys, and consultants" and represent itself in court.
- This creates a dangerous precedent: a tax-funded, semi-autonomous political body that can wage legal battles without the oversight of the State's chief legal officer. This mirrors the worst aspects of bureaucratic overreach, where government entities operate outside standard chains of accountability.

4. Judicial Legislation Finally, the bill mandates that if the political commission fails, the **Supreme Court of Maryland** must "establish the legislative district plan". This forces our judiciary into an inherently political role, threatening the impartiality of the court and asking unelected justices to effectively legislate election boundaries.

Conclusion HB 482 concentrates power in the hands of a few legislative leaders, weakens the Governor, sidelines the Attorney General, and politicizes the Supreme Court. It represents a significant overreach of legislative authority that will erode trust in Maryland's elections.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an **UNFAVORABLE** report on House Bill 482.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, CPNP-PC, BCPA

Resident, Howard County, MD