

WRITTEN TESTIMONY: OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED REDISTRICTING PLAN

TO: The Governor's Redistricting Advisory Commission
FROM: Michael E. Rash Jr., Manchester, MD (Carroll County)
DATE: January 25, 2026

RE: Constitutional Objection to the "Concept Map"; Support for the 2022 Remedial Plan

I. Introduction

My name is Michael E. Rash Jr., and I reside in Manchester, Maryland. I am submitting this testimony to formally oppose the Commission's recommendation to redraw Maryland's congressional districts mid-decade. I urge the Commission to reject the proposed "8-0" map and instead maintain the legally compliant boundaries established by the Courts in 2022.

II. The Proposed Map is "Objectively Unconstitutional"

The Commission's proposal to dismantle District 1 and District 6 is not merely bad policy; it is legally indefensible. I align my testimony directly with the assessment of Senate President Bill Ferguson, who on January 21, 2026, correctly labeled this map as "objectively unconstitutional."

President Ferguson further warned that this proposal "jeopardizes Maryland's existing map" and "breaks apart more neighborhoods and communities than our existing map."

When the leadership of the Maryland Senate publicly states that a proposal violates the Constitution, the Commission has a duty to halt the process. Proceeding with a map that has already been flagged as illegal by state leadership invites costly litigation that the State will inevitably lose.

III. Violation of the Szeliga v. Lamone Precedent

This Commission appears to be repeating the errors of the 2022 cycle. As established in *Szeliga v. Lamone* (2022), Article III, Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution requires districts to be compact and to respect natural boundaries.

The Eastern Shore (District 1): The proposed map crosses the Chesapeake Bay Bridge to dilute the Eastern Shore's vote with Western Shore populations. The Courts have previously scrutinized this exact maneuver. The Eastern Shore, anchored by Harford and Cecil Counties, must remain a unified community of interest.

Western Maryland (District 6): The proposal fractures the distinct rural and mountainous communities of Garrett, Allegany, Washington, and Frederick Counties. These political subdivisions share common agricultural and economic interests that are distinct from the I-270 corridor's urban centers.

IV. The "Sham" Process

The rush to approve this map without substantive policy discussion has exposed this process as a predetermined partisan exercise. As House Minority Leader Jason Buckel noted, this Commission has operated as a “political sham with a pre-determined outcome.” The lack of engagement with the Attorney General’s office regarding the legality of this map—as highlighted by President Ferguson—further demonstrates that this proposal is arbitrary, capricious, and misaligned with good governance.

V. Conclusion

Maryland currently has a map that works, is constitutional, and was vetted by the Courts. There is no legal requirement to redraw lines mid-decade. I demand that the Commission withdraw this risky and unconstitutional proposal and leave the current 2022 Remedial Map in place.

Sincerely,
Michael E. Rash Jr.
Manchester, Maryland