



# MARYLAND REPUBLICAN PARTY

January 25, 2026

Dear Members of the House Committee on Rules,

I would like to express my extreme objection to HB 488.

Any redistricting effort should only be undertaken with a new census to ensure that the Congressional Districts stay equal in population size within Maryland. All Maryland residents should be represented fairly, and a census is the only way to keep the apportionment of residents to Representatives equal.

Furthermore, a fair map uses boundaries that are as compact and contiguous as possible. A fair map takes into account physical natural barriers like large bodies of water or mountains. A fair map takes into account communities of similar culture and lifestyle. The map that came out of the "bipartisan" redistricting commission does not do this. This suggested map cuts the Eastern Shore in two, separating farmers from farmers and watermen from watermen. The suggested map draws small-town Eastern Shore communities into the same district boundaries as white-collar professionals in Annapolis and suburbs in Anne Arundel and Howard counties. There is a lack of cohesiveness and a difference in needs and wants among those competing communities.

I oppose HB 488 because it also started as a purely political move by the Governor and Maryland Democrats. There is no reason to redistrict at this time, other than to seek retribution against President Trump and in response to other states' redistricting. Two wrongs do not make a right. No two states are the same, either, and while other states might be able to make a case for redistricting, we shouldn't be using them as the only reason for our decisions.

The last two of four governors have been Republicans. There are over 1 million Maryland Republicans representing 24% of Maryland voters. Even more people vote Republican when adding in some unaffiliated voters and even some Democrats who cross party lines. Out of eight congressional seats, Republicans have only one representative, which is only 12.5% representation overall. Maryland should truly have two Republican congressmen, and that could be easily done if we respected similar communities and culture, compactness, and natural boundaries. That said, the time for redistricting is not now. The time was in 2021 & 2022, and the next time will occur in 2031 & 2032 with a new and complete census.

The "bipartisan" commission on redistricting consisted of four democrat politicians and one republican who serves in a nonpartisan office. This wasn't a truly fair commission. It wasn't balanced. It didn't even represent the unaffiliated voters of Maryland. The process was rushed, through the holidays, but despite that push, Marylanders made an overwhelming statement against redistricting. The committee's decision was rigged, and a map was advanced anyway.

Considering the magnitude of serious issues that Maryland has to handle in the short 90-day session, redistricting should not be one of them. The fact that the House is taking up precious time for this debate tells many Republicans, including myself, that the Maryland Democrats are not trying to be fair; they're not trying to offer equitable representation, but they are trying to silence voters, silence Republicans, and silence opposition before a single vote can even be placed.

I wholeheartedly oppose HB 488 and any redistricting effort at this time.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,



Nicole Beus Harris  
Chairwoman  
Maryland Republican Party