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Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 488 **House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee**

January 27, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair and members of the Committee.

My name is Sam Kahl. I am a resident of Legislative District 7B in Harford County, and I am also a candidate for Harford County Council District B.

I am testifying today in strong opposition to House Bill 488.

Maryland's current congressional maps are already heavily skewed in favor of Democrats, resulting in a delegation that overwhelmingly favors one party despite the state's diverse electorate. The 1st Congressional District, currently represented by Congressman Andy Harris, is one of the few areas where Republican voices are authentically reflected. Rep. Harris effectively represents the views and interests of both rural and suburban communities in the district, and he provides a vital Republican connection to the Trump administration—ensuring that Maryland's conservative perspectives are heard at the federal level.

This bill proposes a mid-decade redrawing of congressional districts without a new census, court mandate, or compelling demographic shift. It appears designed to eliminate or severely weaken the state's lone Republican-held seat, further entrenching one-party dominance in Maryland's congressional representation.

This approach is particularly troubling given the history of gerrymandering in blue states, especially in the Northeast. States like Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and others have long drawn maps that maximize Democratic seats and minimize Republican representation, often resulting in delegations with little to no GOP voices. Even today, a disproportionate number of Democrat-leaning states have zero Republican representation in Congress, contributing to an imbalance in national discourse.

Meanwhile, the recent electoral wipeouts experienced by Democrats nationwide has strengthened Republican majorities in many states. There are plenty of solidly Republican states that can easily counteract any reduction in Maryland's Republican congressional presence. Pursuing this change in Maryland would not restore balance—it would exacerbate the national trend of diminishing competitive representation and partisan fairness. (*Next page*)

(Continued) Voters in Harford County and across the state deserve stable, fair maps that respect community ties and allow genuine competition, not rushed partisan adjustments that silence minority viewpoints. The proper time for redistricting is after the 2030 census, through a transparent process free from the appearance of one-sided manipulation.

I urge the Committee to reject House Bill 488 and preserve the current maps that, while imperfect, at least provide some bipartisan representation.

Respectfully submitted,
Sam Kahl
Resident, Legislative District 7B
Candidate for Harford County Council District B