

HB 0488 Election Districts -- General Assembly and Representatives in Congress
Dear Members of the General Assembly,

My name is Paul Agle. I live in Maryland Congressional District 6 and Legislative District 17. I am a native American. I was born here and my parents were born here, and that is as native as it gets. I have lived in Gaithersburg, Maryland for 44 years and paid lots of taxes in that time. I believe in law and order and believe our legislators should represent all citizens fairly, but sadly, no longer expect it.

Governor Moore's request to redraw Maryland's congressional boundaries is unfair and clearly political. This is not news to anyone who has been paying attention. Given past partisan redistricting, Maryland has been at the bleeding edge of gerrymandering. Maryland should pass the crown to another state. Districts should be compact and contiguous. District 3 was the third worst gerrymander in the US. Trying to beat this achievement should not be a goal.

Redrawing districts to remove Republican representation would disenfranchise voters and undermine the basic principles of representative government. Further, the state policies that hammer working class voters, the tax hikes, the congestion, the regulation that drives out business and drives natives nuts, and sky high energy prices are causing a realignment. Trying to eliminate the one Republican representative out of eight congressional districts may be a fool's errand. As unwise as disenfranchising 38 percent of Republican leaning Marylanders is, the pure chaos caused by trying to push through a map change at this time is worse. The court battles will be endless and we do not need another 2022 election where the May primaries were pushed into July.

Given recent Supreme Court decisions, and past court decisions on Maryland redistricting maps it seems likely that any new map would violate the new rules and invite endless litigation. Some partisan political objectives are now off the table. It would be nice instead to respect the principles of compactness, continuity, and respect for county and municipal boundaries. Reopening this matter now risks undermining voter confidence, election stability, and public trust in the fairness of our system. Maryland voters deserve balanced and impartial representation—not gerrymandering that favors one party. In an increasingly polarized electorate, doing something to enhance the polarization should not be the legislature's first choice.

Further there is a benefit to having a Republican to represent Maryland's interests in councils that the rest of the delegation aren't privy to. There are some things that we need from the Federal government, such as Federal assistance in the Qloop corridor where that input would be helpful.

For these reasons, I respectfully request an unfavorable vote on "HB 0488 Election Districts General Assembly and Representatives in Congress."

Thank you for your consideration.