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Senate Minority Leader

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Senate Minority Whip



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House Minority Leader

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MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY JOINT REPUBLICAN CAUCUS

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Republican Leaders Introduce the Fair Districts for Maryland Act to Counter Governor Moore's Push for Partisan Mid-Cycle Gerrymandering

Annapolis, MD — Senate and House Republican leaders today announced the Fair Districts for Maryland Act, comprehensive legislation to permanently end mid-cycle redistricting and restore fairness, transparency, and accountability to how Maryland draws its congressional and legislative maps.

Senate Minority Leader Steve Hershey said Governor Wes Moore has abandoned Maryland voters in favor of national Democratic politics, all while misleading the public about the fairness of Maryland's current district lines.

"For Governor Moore to claim Maryland's current maps are 'fair' while simultaneously laying the groundwork for a new, even more partisan redraw is the height of hypocrisy," Hershey said. "He is not leading on behalf of Maryland; he is caving to national Democratic interests and silencing dissenting voices in his own state. And the truth is, the map we have today is already ripe for a court challenge. Any map the Governor tries to force through mid-cycle could easily end up before the courts — and Democrats should not be confident they'll get the outcome they want."

Republicans noted that Maryland's deeply partisan redistricting history makes this moment especially urgent.

"Maryland already is known as one of the most gerrymandered states in America. Annapolis Democrats like it that way and have consistently refused to reform our redistricting process," said House Minority Leader Jason Buckel. "It is too political, it solely benefits the party in power, it completely ignores unaffiliated voters, and it allows one party's politicians to pick their voters. We believe there is a better way, one that is much more balanced than what the Governor is proposing, and that is the Fair Districts for Maryland Act."

The Fair Districts for Maryland Act establishes a 10-member Redistricting Commission that may only meet in the year following the census, eliminating the possibility of a mid-cycle redistricting.

The 10-member commission will consist of:

- Two members appointed by the Governor, *one of whom must be an unaffiliated voter*
- The Speaker of the House of Delegates
- The President of the Senate
- The House Minority Leader
- The Senate Minority Leader
- Each of these four legislative leaders will also appoint a designee who will serve on the Commission.

The bill also sets clear standards for drawing both congressional and legislative districts. These standards require districts to be:

- Geographically contiguous
- Respectful of natural boundaries, geographic integrity, and the continuity of any municipal corporation, county, or political subdivision, to the extent practicable
- Geographically compact, incorporating nearby areas of population to the extent practicable
- Reflective of communities of common interest

The legislation further ensures that no partisan data may be used in the redistricting process. Individuals' voter registration, voter history, and political affiliation may not be considered, nor may the Commission consider the residence of any incumbent or potential candidate for office.

"Politicians who put party over principle and partisanship over doing what's right for Maryland's citizens will be tempted to choose the path of extreme gerrymandering to benefit a partisan advantage in DC," said Buckel. However, we believe it is essential to appeal to our better selves and work to protect democracy. The Fair Districts for Maryland Act has the power to ensure that redistricting is as fair as possible. This is the right bill in the right moment, and we hope it gets the consideration it deserves."

House Minority Whip Jesse Pippy emphasized the stakes for representation.

"Maryland currently has only one Republican Congressman, even though roughly 40% of Marylanders vote Republican," said Pippy. "The fact that the Governor would even entertain the idea of further disenfranchising these voters is wrong."

Senate Minority Whip Justin Ready said the new legislation offers Maryland a stable and responsible path forward.

"Redistricting in Maryland should serve the interests of all Marylanders not national party interests," Ready said. "The Fair Districts for Maryland Act puts an end to partisan gamesmanship and restores a process built on real fairness and transparency. If Governor Moore truly wants to represent the entire state, he should stand with us and support a system that protects every Marylander's voice — not powerful D.C. politicians."

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