

1 HEARING ON CONGRESSIONAL
2 REDISTRICTING BILL EXCERPT
3 Monday, October 17, 2011

4 THE CLERK: Senate Bill 1, the President Congressional
5 Districting Plan. Favorable. This is an emergency bill.

6 MR. PRESIDENT: Okay, this is an emergency bill. We're
7 going to recognize the distinguished chairman of the
8 committee.

9 SENATOR ROBEY: Thank you, Mr. President. The
10 Redistricting Committee held a joint hearing with the House
11 Rules Committee today. I want to thank the members of the
12 Committee for their participation in the hearing.

13 I would also like to recognize the senator from
14 Montgomery County and the senator from Baltimore City for
15 their service as vice chairs of the Committee.

16 I would also like to recognize the distinguished
17 minority leader for her thoughtful participation in this
18 process.

19 This afternoon we heard several proposals for redrawing
20 the State's congressional boundaries, and I expect that the
21 Senate will hear several alternatives proposals as they are
22 introduced as amendments this evening.

23 The Committee voted to support the Administration's
24 Redistricting Plan, which is substantially similar to the
25 plan recommended by the Governor's Redistricting Advisory
26 Committee.

27 The Commission held 12 public hearings, which were
28 attended by more than 1000 Marylanders. The Commission also

29 received testimony from more than 350 individuals. Many of
30 the issues raised by ordinary Marylanders were addressed in
31 the Commission's map.

32 The Commission released its map to the public well in
33 advance of this session and the governor accepted public
34 comments before releasing the final version of the map.

35 In short, the Commission conducted itself in an open and
36 transparent manner and allowed ample opportunity for public
37 participation.

38 The Commission worked to insure that the majority of
39 Marylanders remained in their current congressional
40 districts.

41 The Commission also insured that each incumbent member
42 of Congress remained in his or her current district.

43 I would like to take a moment to explain the legal
44 standards involved with congressional redistricting.

45 We're required to redraw our congressional boundaries
46 once a decade in response to changes in our State's
47 population revealed by the census. We are required to draw
48 it districts of equal population.

49 Ten years ago the ideal district was 662,061 people.
50 Today it is 721,529. Reaching the ideal population was no
51 small feat.

52 Maryland's largest congressional district, the 5th, had
53 nearly 47,000 too many residents. The smallest, the 7th, had

54 57,000 too few.

55 The Governor's plan meets the population requirement.

56 Each district has 721,529 residents, except for the 8th,

57 which has one fewer than ideal.

58 The Governor's plan meets the requirements while keeping

59 70 percent of Marylanders in their current district.

60 We are required by law to draw a plan that complies with

61 the Voting Rights Act.

62 The Governor's plan protects two majority minority

63 district and maintains the voting strength of the African

64 American community in the 3rd District.

65 The State retained a nationally recognized expert on the

66 Voting Rights Act to review this plan. He has advised us

67 that this plan complies with the letter and the spirit of the

68 Voting Rights Act.

69 We have been advised that the Governor's plan complies

70 with all constitutional and statutory requirements.

71 I would like to take a moment to explain the components

72 of each district.

73 The 1st District includes the entire Eastern Shore, plus

74 parts of Baltimore, Carroll and Hartford counties. The

75 proposed district keeps the Eastern Shore in tact, a goal

76 expressed by many witnesses who testified at Commission's

77 hearing on the Eastern Shore. The proposed district

78 preserved the rural nature of the district. 84.2 percent of

79 the residents of the proposed district are residents of the
80 current 1st District.

81 The 2nd District includes part of Anne Arundel,
82 Baltimore, Hartford, and Howard counties, plus part of
83 Baltimore City. The proposed district keeps the major
84 military installations in the Baltimore region in the same
85 district which will allow the representatives of that
86 district to focus on the growth and development concerns in
87 the wake of BRAC. 80 percent of the residents of the
88 proposed district are residents of the current 2nd District.

89 The 3rd District includes parts of Anne Arundel,
90 Baltimore, Howard, and Montgomery counties, plus parts of
91 Baltimore City.

92 In creating the 3rd District the Commission balanced
93 against keeping the component parts of the current 3rd
94 District in a new 3rd District. These components include
95 Pikesville and Baltimore County, the waterfront neighborhoods
96 in Baltimore City, Annapolis, and parts of Columbia. More
97 than two-thirds of the residents of the proposed district are
98 residents of the current 3rd District.

99 The 4th District includes parts of Anne Arundel and
100 Prince George's counties. The proposed district has 54.5
101 percent African American voting age population. The current
102 Fourth includes parts of Montgomery County; however, the
103 Commission heard testimony in Montgomery and Prince George's

104 County that the by county configuration was not acceptable to
105 many residents of the two counties. In response the
106 Commission recommended sealing the border between the two
107 counties. 57.6 percent of the residents of the proposed
108 district are residents of the current 4th District.

109 The 4th District includes all of Calvert, Charles, and
110 St. Mary's counties and parts of Anne Arundel County and
111 Prince George's counties. The proposed district includes the
112 major federal installations which are part of the current
113 district, including the Patuxent Naval Air Station, Indian
114 Head Naval Surface Warfare Center, NASA's Goddard Space
115 Flight Center, National Archives II, the Smithsonian
116 Environmental Research Center, as well as the related
117 research and economic development resources of the University
118 of Maryland College Park.

119 93.3 percent of the residents of the proposed district
120 are residents of the current 5th District.

121 The 6th District includes all of Allegany, Garrett, and
122 Washington counties, and parts of Frederick and Montgomery
123 counties. The proposed district reflects substantial public
124 testimony, particularly at the Commission's hearing in
125 Frederick about the population trends, the transportation at
126 works, the regional economic engines, and the shared media
127 markets along the Interstate 270 corridor. 51.5 percent of
128 the residents of the proposed district are residents of the

129 current 6th District.

130 The 7th District includes parts of Baltimore and Howard
131 counties and part of Baltimore City. The proposed district
132 has 54.5 percent African American voting age residents. The
133 proposed district remains a Baltimore City center district.
134 84.5 percent of the residence deputies of the proposed
135 district are residents of the current 7th District.

136 The 8th District includes parts of Carroll, Frederick,
137 and Montgomery counties. As with the 6th District this
138 change in alignment reflects substantial public testimony
139 about the links between the Washington, D.C. suburbs and the
140 exuberant communities. 65.5 percent of the residents of the
141 proposed district are residents of the current 8th District.

142 As we begin this debate it's important to remember that
143 there are 47 members of the Senate. Left to our own devices
144 we would draw at least 47 different configurations of this
145 map, and maybe more.

146 Like any other bill that comes before us this one
147 represents compromises. It is important to remember that
148 this plan achieves the constitutional requirement of
149 population equality and complies with the letter and spirit
150 of the Voting Rights Act.

151 It is also important to remember that this keeps 77
152 percent of the Marylanders in their current congressional
153 districts and it keeps each member of Congress in their

154 current district. It reflects change to the State's
155 population and public testimony received through the
156 Commission's process.

157 I move favorable on Senate Bill 1, Mr. President.

158 MR. PRESIDENT: The question is the adoption of the
159 favorable committee report. Any discussion? If not, all in
160 favor aye, opposed no.

161 The favorable committee report is adopted.

162 [Whereupon, the excerpt concluded.]