HEARING ON CONGRESSIONAL

REDISTRICTING BILL EXCERPT

Monday, October 17, 2011
THE CLERK: Senate Bill 1, the President Congressional Districting Plan. Favorable. This is an emergency bill.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Commission held 12 public hearings, which were attended by more than 1000 Marylanders. The Commission also
received testimony from more than 350 individuals. Many of
the issues raised by ordinary Marylanders were addressed in
the Commission's map.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Maryland's largest congressional district, the 5th, had
nearly 47,000 too many residents. The smallest, the 7th, had
The Governor's plan meets the population requirement. Each district has 721,529 residents, except for the 8th, which has one fewer than ideal.

The Governor's plan meets the requirements while keeping 70 percent of Marylanders in their current district.

We are required by law to draw a plan that complies with the Voting Rights Act.

The Governor's plan protects two majority minority district and maintains the voting strength of the African American community in the 3rd District.

The State retained a nationally recognized expert on the Voting Rights Act to review this plan. He has advised us that this plan complies with the letter and the spirit of the Voting Rights Act.

We have been advised that the Governor's plan complies with all constitutional and statutory requirements.

I would like to take a moment to explain the components of each district.

The 1st District includes the entire Eastern Shore, plus parts of Baltimore, Carroll and Hartford counties. The proposed district keeps the Eastern Shore in tact, a goal expressed by many witnesses who testified at Commission's hearing on the Eastern Shore. The proposed district preserved the rural nature of the district. 84.2 percent of
the residents of the proposed district are residents of the current 1st District.

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

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

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

The 4th District includes parts of Anne Arundel and Prince George's counties. The proposed district has 54.5 percent African American voting age population. The current Fourth includes parts of Montgomery County; however, the Commission heard testimony in Montgomery and Prince George's
County that the by county configuration was not acceptable to many residents of the two counties. In response the Commission recommended sealing the border between the two counties. 57.6 percent of the residents of the proposed district are residents of the current 4th District. The 4th District includes all of Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties and parts of Anne Arundel County and Prince George's counties. The proposed district includes the major federal installations which are part of the current district, including the Patuxent Naval Air Station, Indian Head Naval Surface Warfare Center, NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, National Archives II, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, as well as the related research and economic development resources of the University of Maryland College Park.

93.3 percent of the residents of the proposed district are residents of the current 5th District. The 6th District includes all of Allegany, Garrett, and Washington counties, and parts of Frederick and Montgomery counties. The proposed district reflects substantial public testimony, particularly at the Commission's hearing in Frederick about the population trends, the transportation at works, the regional economic engines, and the shared media markets along the Interstate 270 corridor. 51.5 percent of the residents of the proposed district are residents of the
7th District includes parts of Baltimore and Howard counties and part of Baltimore City. The proposed district has 54.5 percent African American voting age residents. The proposed district remains a Baltimore City center district. 84.5 percent of the residence deputies of the proposed district are residents of the current 7th District.

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

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

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

It is also important to remember that this keeps 77 percent of the Marylanders in their current congressional districts and it keeps each member of Congress in their
current district. It reflects change to the State's population and public testimony received through the Commission's process.

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

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

The favorable committee report is adopted.

[Whereupon, the excerpt concluded.]