



The Senate of Maryland
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

October 28, 2025

Dear Colleagues:

During the caucus meeting last Tuesday, we discussed congressional redistricting and the possibility of a special session. I want to follow up on that discussion to provide some additional clarity regarding why; after speaking with many of you individually, the Senate is choosing not to move forward with mid-cycle congressional redistricting. Despite deeply shared frustrations about the state of our country, mid-cycle redistricting for Maryland presents a reality where the legal risks are too high, the timeline for action is dangerous, the downside risk to Democrats is catastrophic, and the certainty of our existing map would be undermined.

First, let me acknowledge that nationwide, we are in a fight for democracy and that redistricting is at the core of this fight because of President Trump's actions. In state after state, leaders are considering redrawing congressional maps in the middle of the decade to disenfranchise minority party voters: not because the census changed - not because population shifted - but because political winds did. The result of this has been an all-out attack on the Democratic Party and the core of democracy.

States like Texas and North Carolina are responding to Trump's incessant demands that they redistrict to rig the election results against Democrats. This push means that each of you are feeling the weight of the need to fight back, not just intrinsically, but from neighbors, family, other electeds, and constituents. I understand that pressure, as I am experiencing it alongside you. That is why I write to provide a little more clarity about our decision not to participate in mid-cycle redistricting. In short, the risk of redrawing the congressional map in Maryland is too high, making the unlikely possibility that we gain a seat not worth pursuing.

2022 Congressional Map Court Case

As many of you recall, during the December 2021 Special Session, the General Assembly passed a new congressional map that we were confident complied with federal and Maryland law. As expected, Republicans challenged the map (*see [Szeliga v. Lamone, No. C-02-CV-21-001816 \(Md. Cir. Ct. Mar. 25, 2022\)](#)*). Unexpectedly, however, Senior Judge Lynne A. Battaglia from the Supreme Court of Maryland, who was designated to be the trial judge in the case, struck down the map, finding that the map violated the Maryland Constitution and was "a product of extreme partisan gerrymandering." In this 94-page opinion, she applied a novel standard to congressional redistricting, expressly tying map-making on the basis of political party to violations of Maryland's Declaration of Rights.

In response, we passed a new congressional map before the end of the 2022 Legislative Session, and all parties withdrew their legal claims. It is important to note this, because the withdrawal of the challenges meant that *Maryland's highest court has never reviewed the current congressional map*. That means that *any* redrawing of the current map could reopen the ability for someone to challenge the current map and give the court the opportunity to strike it down, or even worse, redraw the map itself.

In Maryland, 31.5% of registered voters are registered Republicans. We do not know how a court would assess a revised midcycle map and whether the court would use party affiliation as a measure. We do, however, have certainty under the current map; that evaporates the moment we start down the path of redistricting mid-cycle with an unclear legal landscape and an even more unclear legal timeline.

Timing Ahead of 2026 Primary and General Elections

That brings me to the timing of any possible mid-cycle redistricting and its impact on the 2026 Primary and General Elections. Based on the procedural timeline following legal action against the congressional map the Maryland General Assembly passed in 2021, it is highly likely that passing a new map would have ramifications on the 2026 Election. At a bare minimum, it is highly likely that the filing deadline for office would be pushed back, as well as a need to delay the June 2026 Primary Election which the legislature just set during last Session. The length of those delays is very dependent on how quickly the local boards of election could implement a new map after all legal challenges are settled, which almost certainly means additional weeks of a delay, if not months.

Effect on Other States Deciding to Redraw Maps

As several national news outlets have noted, many states face limitations on their ability to engage in mid-cycle redistricting, either due to the absence of a supermajority in both legislative chambers and executive control, or a lack of available seats to flip. But for those states that are categorized as able to redistrict, Republican states are able to possibly redistrict 20 more seats to be Republican congressional seats than Democratic states: “Republican state legislative majorities oversee 55 Democratic congressional seats while Democratic state legislative majorities oversee only 35 Republican districts” ([New York Times, “Democratic Group Calls on Blue States to Redraw Maps, August 4, 2025”](#)).

Further, over the past few months, I have spoken with my counterparts in other states. One theme has echoed throughout all these conversations that I do not think is being captured in national discussions regarding redistricting - several Republican states are resisting pressure to redistrict and are mostly able to do so because Maryland and other Democratic states are not redistricting either. In short - if Maryland redistricts, Republican-led states that were not planning to do so, will. That means that Maryland’s potential gain of one seat is immediately eliminated, and, in fact, worsens the national outlook.

Racial Gerrymandering

One additional concern that I think is worth highlighting is one raised by the Legislative Black Caucus in Illinois - the history of racial gerrymandering and the need to preserve equitable African American voting access (see [Illinois Capital News, “Jeffries’ Illinois Redistricting Push Meets Cool Reception in Springfield, October 22, 2025”](#)). Maryland has long fought against racial gerrymandering, including packing African Americans in districts unfairly or splitting up African American voters (“cracking”), essentially diluting the African American vote. The principle of fairness, which undergirds the problems with racial gerrymandering, could also apply to mid-cycle redistricting. Understanding the

importance of the equal opportunity to vote, the Senate of Maryland went so far as to pass a state-level Voting Rights Act last Session.

It is hypocritical to say that it is abhorrent to tactically shift voters based on race, but not to do so based on party affiliation. As we weigh the risk and grounds for mid-cycle redistricting in Maryland, it is important to acknowledge the jurisprudence and work of many to create racially fair maps.

Fighting Back Against the Attack on Democracy

I want to conclude by noting that I have personal concerns with mid-cycle redistricting and its potential long-term effects on the resilience and trust in democracy. It is true that I believe that mid-cycle redistricting in Maryland twists rules for potential short-term advantage while undermining trust in institutions and ultimately, democracy, but that is not the reason we should not pursue it. Simply put, it is too risky and jeopardizes Maryland's ability to fight against the radical Trump Administration. At a time where every seat in Congress matters, the potential for ceding yet another one to Republicans here in Maryland is simply too great.

Now more than ever, understanding our challenging legal landscape when it comes to mid-cycle redistricting, we must fight back methodically against the daily attacks on Maryland and democracy. Instead of being subsumed by redistricting, we should focus on policies that will tangibly improve the lives of Marylanders in the face of this federal onslaught and demonstrate the power of states in checking a lawless president. I am prepared to do that alongside each and every one of you. I look forward to the policies we will pass in the 2026 legislative session to protect access to healthcare, ensure fair elections, support our immigrant neighbors, and so much more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill", enclosed within a light blue rectangular box.

William C. Ferguson IV
Senate President