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March 28, 2022

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Madam Speaker:

We applaud Friday's ruling by Senior Judge Lynne A. Battaglia finding the congressional redistricting maps drawn and approved by the Maryland General Assembly to be unconstitutional. As you are aware, our members vociferously opposed the plan when it came before the General Assembly during the 2021 Special Session in December.

The court found the Congressional redistricting plan violated Article III, Section 4 of the Maryland Constitution, requiring legislative districts to "consist of adjoining territory, be compact in form", and respect natural boundaries and the boundaries of political subdivisions. The court's ruling closely mirrors the very arguments the members of our Caucus made in opposing this legislative plan during the 2021 Special Session.

The court also found the Congressional redistricting plan passed by the General Assembly to be in violation of Articles 7, 24, and 40 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights. As you know, these provisions provide that Maryland's elections be "free and frequent," as well as guarantee equal protection and free speech. The courts findings in this area also closely mirror our members' arguments from the 2021 Special Session.

One of most powerful statements in the courts' ruling states "with respect to the evaluation of the 2021 Plan through the lens of the Constitution and Declaration of Rights, it is axiomatic that popular sovereignty is the paramount consideration in a republican, democratic government. The limitation of undue extension of power by any branch of government must be exercised to ensure that the will of the people is heard, no matter which political placard those governing reside. **The 2021 Congressional Plan is unconstitutional, and subverts that will of those governed.**"

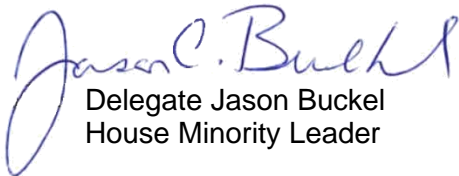
Friday's ruling was a historic one, and now the Maryland General Assembly has a historic opportunity to do the right thing. Rather than formulate another map whose genesis can be hidden under the dark cloak of "legislative privilege" as the previous plan was, the General Assembly

should adopt what is – quite literally – the will of the governed. The map created by the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission is ready to go. It has been vetted through nearly a year-long process with input from all regions of the state. The map already exists in bill format. This should have been the plan the General Assembly adopted to begin with, but, as Nelson Mandela used to say, “it is never too late to do the right thing.”


Should the General Assembly decide to reject the Citizen’s Map and again create its own congressional map, it is critical that this map be drawn with the utmost transparency. Members of the Minority Party must present during its creation – not just handed a map of unknown origin after it is drawn. The individuals responsible for drawing the map must be identified and any directions or guidelines given to them must be made public.

Too much of the last process was shielded during the court case under the dark cloak of “legislative privilege”. The result was, according to the court’s ruling, “an outlier and a product of extreme partisan gerrymandering.” We are the citizen’s representatives, and the citizens will be impacted by these maps for the next three election cycles. We owe it to them to do the best possible job with the utmost transparency. It is the only way to regain and retain their trust.

Sincerely yours,



Delegate Jason Buckel
House Minority Leader



Delegate Haven Shoemaker
House Minority Whip