

Senate Bill 0008 – General Provisions – State Song Repeal
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee – March 11, 2021

SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important symbolic gesture that will reinforce the Legislature's commendable commitments to justice under the law for all Marylanders in 2021: **REPEAL *Maryland! My Maryland!* as our State Song**. In this year of necessary restrictions due to the pandemic, I believe your top priority should be to repeal the song in the 2021 session, leaving the matter of its replacement for post-session. Therefore, I urge you to support SB0008 sponsored by Senator Kagan and SB0341 submitted by the Maryland State Archives, rather than SB0087 sponsored by Senator West.

Maryland is the only state in the country with a Confederate symbol for its State song. Its lyrics glorify Maryland's shameful slave-holding history. To think that Maryland children have been singing this awful song for seven decades makes me cringe with angry embarrassment. That is why I initiated a virtual chorus production of a possible replacement song, premiered at the **Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland's** 2021 kick-off event on January 23rd, with Senate President Bill Ferguson giving the Keynote Address and Delegate Alonzo Washington giving the closing Call to Action, with more than 100 Marylanders attending. (I am a Vice Chair of UULM MD).

Furthermore, I believe repealing our horribly racist state song is a small but required reparative action to move from truth towards reconciliation for the legacies of slavery such as the racial terror lynchings in our state. As a co-chair of the **Prince George's County Lynching Memorial Project**, which "educates the public on the truths of our nation's continuing legacy of slavery, memorializes victims of the five known racial terror lynchings in our county, and advances the cause of racial justice and reconciliation through mutual support and collaboration," I urge you to repeal of the State Song and also commend the legislature for its pioneering creation and support of the State of Maryland Lynching Memorial Commission, the first in the nation.

When you need a five-minute uplift, please watch [Maryland, My Maryland: The Free State Song](#) (lyrics by Rep. Jamie Raskin, composed by Steve Jones, video by Nadja Bruskin). It is fun to sing, with lyrics we can sing with pride, extolling democracy, not the Confederacy. Plus it is a great teaching tool, with its images of famous people and places of Maryland. Our diverse singers are residents from around the state.

In closing, I ask for your support for Senate Bills 008/0341 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report. Let this be the year for us to topple Maryland's musical monument to the Confederacy and send a strong message that all are welcome and equal in today's Maryland.

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