

John P. Zebelean, III
5605 Wilkens Avenue
Catonsville, Maryland 21228

I'm adamantly opposed to the repeal of *Maryland, My Maryland* as our State Song. Composer James Ryder Randall speaks to the most tumultuous period in Maryland's long history. *Maryland, My Maryland* drips history. Few people are knowledgeable of its verses or origin because it is no longer taught or sung in Maryland public schools unlike when I was in elementary school.

Some claim that the song is racist, yet there's not a racist word in it. It speaks of despotism and 'despot' fits Mr. Lincoln's Administration. Maryland had not seceded, yet her citizens were denied their Constitutionally guaranteed protections as Lincoln unilaterally suspended the right of Habeas Corpus. Never mind that the Constitution only allows temporary suspension when authorized by the Legislative branch not the Executive. Marylanders suffered flagrant Constitutional abuses which included unlawful imprisonment of hundreds of citizens, violation of freedom of the press, speech, and 2nd Amendment rights. Talbot County Circuit Court Judge Richard B. Carmichael was literally dragged from the bench during court by Federal troops and pistol whipped before being incarcerated in Boston for signing writs of Habeas Corpus. Also arrested and held without trial were Baltimore police commissioners, city council members, a Maryland Congressman, and finally members of this very Legislature, including the speaker of the House, all of whom spent months jailed in Boston Harbor.

History is complicated; it can't be changed, but attempts can be made to obliterate or pave over it. Let's not forget the history of Maryland where in the 1860 election, Abraham Lincoln ran a distant fourth garnering just over two per cent of the vote. Maryland cast its lot with John Breckinridge. During the Civil War, Maryland was occupied by thousands of Federal troops imposing martial law. Just as our National Anthem is the product of dangerous times in Maryland, so too does our State Song reflect a troubled period, a period that must not be forgotten.

Repeal of *Maryland My Maryland* would be yet another act in the cancel culture movement. As a veteran of two tours in Vietnam, and service during Desert Storm, I resent the removal of historical monuments just as I oppose the repeal of our State Song that captures Maryland's darkest hour. I urge this committee to resist the temptation to obliterate more of Maryland's historical past.