

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
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Michael L. Hewitt



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February 4, 2021

The Honorable Anne R. Kaiser, Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 655 - Local Government – County Commissioner Elections – District Voting
Hearing: February 9, 2021

Dear Chairman Kaiser and the members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

The purpose of this written testimony is to express my OPPOSITION to HB 655 regarding the election of County Commissioners in St Mary's County, Maryland. Delegate Brian Crosby of District 29B has introduced this legislation but will not communicate why it's necessary or what ills it would remedy. I personally reached out to him as have the rest of the Commissioners of St Mary's County requesting why the Bill is necessary. He responded that we should listen to his presentation to your Committee to hear his response. His lack of a response is a slap in the face to the elected leaders of our County.

St Mary's County has a long history using the current form of electing Commissioners and does not need to be changed. Several years ago, the County decided to request changing the form of government to Code Home Rule. Many Public meetings were held on the benefits of moving to Code Home Rule, but the citizens defeated the issue resoundingly. If Delegate Crosby feels the issue is so important, why hasn't he scheduled any Public meetings or given avenues for public input. His disregard for finding out what the popular opinion of the citizens may be is another slap in the face to the voters of St Mary's County.

A better idea would be to have a County referendum on the issue and let the voters tell us how they feel. Again, for him to "go it alone" without inputs from elected leaders or the public is a disservice to the citizens and HB 655 should be defeated.

Sincerely,

Michael L Hewitt
County Commissioner
District 2
Hollywood/Leonardtwn