

EXHIBIT 17

GOP, others find faults with proposed map

By Annie Linskey and John Fritze, The Baltimore Sun

OCTOBER 13, 2011, 11:36 AM

Maryland Republicans criticized a proposal Tuesday to redraw the state's congressional map, saying a Democratic-controlled panel seeking to bolster the party's position would separate communities with like-minded views and fuse areas with little in common.

Some Democrats also expressed concern that the map that would add conservative voters to a heavily African-American district in the Washington suburbs now represented by the state's only black congresswoman.

Gov. Martin O'Malley, who appointed the five-member committee that drew the map, said Tuesday that he would consider public comments submitted over the next seven days but that he intends to submit to the General Assembly Oct. 17 a map "that is substantially similar" to the one released by the committee Monday.

The map — which will determine the state's representation in Washington for the next decade — was prepared by the Governor's Redistricting Advisory Committee using new population data collected in the 2010 Census.

James King, a former state delegate, the lone Republican on the panel and only dissenter in the vote to approve the map, said he was particularly bothered by the reconfigured 6th District. The generally conservative Western Maryland district would take on a huge swath of the Washington suburbs and shift from a safe Republican seat to a toss-up.

Some Democrats have privately acknowledged their intention to try to unseat the district's Republican congressman, Roscoe G. Bartlett.

From a demographic perspective, King said, the plan "doesn't make a lot of sense."

"The only objective is Democratic power," said state GOP Chairman Alex X. Mooney. The map "destroys the Western Maryland congressional district."

Another concern to some Republicans and a leader of the Legislative Black Caucus is the proposed 4th District, a seat now held by Rep. Donna Edwards, a Democrat. The district is made up of an African-American-dominated chunk of Prince George's County plus a majority-white portion of Montgomery County.

The proposed new configuration would swap the Montgomery County piece for a stretch of Anne Arundel County including traditionally conservative communities ringing Annapolis.

"You end up with people in the district that have very diverse values," said Democratic state Del. Aisha Braveboy, vice chair of the black caucus. "A congressional member should reflect the values of their entire district."

Todd Eberly, the coordinator of public policy studies at St. Mary's College, agreed, saying black Democratic voters from Prince George's are being to be used to dilute the influence of conservative Anne Arundel residents.

He also said that the state's growing Hispanic population remains spread out over several congressional districts under the new plan.

Rep. Elijah Cummings, the 7th District Democrat from Baltimore, said he felt "the distribution of the African-American and Hispanic vote was fair."

Though the map is designed to create a re-election challenge for Bartlett, the proposal does not target Maryland's other GOP congressman, Andrew Harris. The map would actually add some Republican voters to his 1st District, largely made up of the Eastern Shore.

"My main request was that the Eastern Shore be left intact," Harris said. And it was, he said.

Jeanne Hitchcock, a longtime aide to O'Malley who chaired the panel, defended the map, saying the committee took great pains to respect community lines, geographical boundaries like rivers and roads, and population trends.

Hitchcock explained the redrawn Western Maryland district in demographic terms, saying it reflects a migration along Interstate 270, where Montgomery County residents have pushed north over the last decade. About one-third of the 131,000 people who moved to Frederick County in the past 10 years came from Montgomery County, according to Internal Revenue Service data.

Under the proposed map, another big change would be in the 8th District, a seat now held by Rep. Christopher Van Hollen. The new district would include the eastern half of Montgomery County instead of the western half, and would rise through GOP-controlled portions of Frederick County all the way up to the Pennsylvania border.

The lines are so different that 43 percent of residents would be new to the district, according to figures released Tuesday by the governor's panel. The new district would include far more Republican

voters. In last year's gubernatorial race, more than 70 percent of voters supported O'Malley; in the proposed district, that figure drops to 58 percent.

Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller helped draw the map and voted for it, but he acknowledged that at least one district is "odd shaped" — the 3rd. The district, now represented by Rep. John P. Sarbanes, currently forms a "Z" that crosses the Baltimore region. The new plan retains that shape and then adds a swirl along the coastline that hops over rivers and ends in Annapolis.

Miller said that configuration stemmed from the committee's desire to consider Sarbanes' wishes. "We recognized that Congressman Sarbanes lived in Baltimore County, but wanted to continue to represent the capital city Annapolis, and that was challenging," Miller said.

Asked about that, Sarbanes said in a statement: "Annapolis is an important part of the district I represent, and I expressed that from the outset of this process."

Miller said the panel worked to accommodate other requests, including from Democratic Reps. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger of Baltimore County and Steny H. Hoyer of Southern Maryland. "We recognized the fact that Congressman Ruppersberger, for example, is on the Intelligence Committee," Miller said. "We tried to be sure that he represented both Aberdeen [Proving Ground] and Fort Meade, which was kind of challenging."

About Hoyer, Miller said that the panel "recognized that Congressman Hoyer lives in St. Mary's County and wants to represent Pax River, but also wanted to represent his alma mater, College Park, and that was challenging."

"If you are in public office, you don't want to give up a single precinct," Miller said.

Hoyer said he is "pleased" that he's not seeing any "drastic changes" to his district.

annie.linskey@baltsun.com

<http://twitter.com/annielinskey>

john.fritze@baltsun.com

Copyright © 2016, The Baltimore Sun, a Baltimore Sun Media Group publication | Place an Ad

This article is related to: Elections, Republican Party, Executive Branch, Media Industry, Democratic Party, Thomas V. Mike Miller, Steny Hoyer

