

I would like to mention that presently under the existing 142 member House of Delegates, there are nine political subdivisions that are single member districts. This experience has been valuable and fruitful, and it is the last thing in the mind of the proponents of this amendment to change this by any arbitrary action. In fact, under the 40-120 plan just adopted by this body, after the 1970 census there would be subdivisions that would have fewer than one delegate.

It may well be that these areas can be most appropriately served by a single member district.

I say this because it would be advantageous if these areas have fewer than one delegate, that the district should be as small as possible, to afford them the best chance of having a person who was a resident of their county elected. It would not be to their advantage to run from a large multi-member district, because that could be the last opportunity they would ever have to elect a delegate they could call their own.

Now, I would like to mention that there are also ten subdivisions, using Delegate Gallagher's figures, that would have between one and three delegates. It may well be that these subdivisions would be best served by single member districts, but it may also not be. Under this proposal they could be served by one, two, or three delegates.

In the final category are five subdivisions that would have, using the 1970 census figures, between 9 and 28 delegates, and these are in alphabetical order, Anne Arundel County, 9 delegates; Baltimore County, 19 delegates; Baltimore City, 28 delegates; Montgomery County, 15 delegates; Prince George's County, 18 delegates.

These are the figures that I have hastily gotten together, when we move from Delegate Gallagher's 105-man House of Delegates to the 120-man House of Delegates just adopted.

Now I submit, particularly, in these five subdivisions of the State, it would fragment and disrupt the political map of these subdivisions to impose upon them single member districts. Once again, I do not remove the possibility that we may go in the future, or indeed at the next census count, to single-member districts in all or some of these subdivisions, but this should not be done arbitrarily, as would be the case under the language submitted by the Committee on the Legislative Branch.

I use the word "political map" advisedly, because somehow at this Convention the cause for the single member district has become identified with apple pie and motherhood, and anyone who seems to be against it is for perpetuation of political bosses throughout the State.

This is not the case. Let me use an example of the existing structure. In Baltimore City there are now two districts with eight delegates, three with seven, one with six. This would be scrubbed out entirely under this amendment, if adopted. None of these districts could remain intact. The most that any one district could have anywhere would be three delegates. Montgomery County has two districts with seven delegates. This would come to an abrupt end, a maximum of three. Prince Georges has one with seven and one with six. Once again, the maximum any one of these districts in Prince Georges could have would be three. All five-member and four-member districts would be scrubbed out entirely.

Now, having suggested that we adopt a flexible system that allows a determination of what best serves the interest of the subdivision of the people, I would like to speak to the arguments that are raised, both on the floor by Delegate Gallagher and in the Majority Report of the Committee on the Legislative Branch.

It is argued that single member districts, compulsory single member districts provide visibility, a word that we have heard a great deal in the last several days. In fact, quoting from the report, it says, on page 7, in the one paragraph that is allotted to this discussion, single member districts create "a concentration of public attention upon the individual delegate".

I submit that this concentration of public attention could be equally focused upon three delegates as upon one. The subtle factor that seems to be present in all of the arguments for single member district is really an argument against six, seven and eight member districts. The argument does not apply to three member districts, which would be the maximum under this amendment.

Now, another argument is, and I quote, "single member districts would eliminate large and amorphous multi-member districts."

Once again, I submit that under a maximum of three delegates, there would not be large and amorphous multi-member districts. They would be compact, contiguous districts of a workable size.