



# LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Over 1.7 Million Black Marylanders Underscores need to Correct Inequities in Representation at the Federal and State Levels through the Redistricting Process

Annapolis, Maryland – Senator Catherine Pugh (D-40<sup>th</sup> District) of Baltimore, Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus and Delegate Aisha Braveboy (D-25<sup>th</sup> District) of Prince George’s County, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair – co-chairs the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland’s Redistricting Committee – say they have formed a redistricting committee to ensure that districts are drawn in a manner that guarantees legislative lines are consistent with the demographic changes and realities of the State. The committee held its first meeting, this past August and since, then has met with the State’s African American representatives in the U.S. Congress –additional meetings have been requested with other members of the Congressional Delegation for this spring.

Senator Pugh and Delegate Braveboy point to the 15.1% growth of the State’s Black population as one of the reasons the redistricting plan must ensure that Black Marylanders have a fair and equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice at both the Federal and State levels.

“The 2010 Census figures released on February 9, 2011 show that the Black population in Maryland rose by 15.1%, and that African Americans now make up 29.4% of the state’s total population,” said Pugh. “We now constitute nearly a third of the state’s population and yet we are underrepresented in Federal and State Legislatures for Maryland. This inequity can be corrected in the redistricting process.”

While African Americans have historically been concentrated in Baltimore City and Prince George’s County, the recent Census figures show that blacks are more than 40% of the population of Charles County and have grown significantly in Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery and Somerset Counties.

“Currently, African Americans make up only 17% of the State Senate and 25% of the House of Delegates, a level of representation that is inconsistent with the State’s demographics,” said Senator Pugh. Our Caucus hopes to work with the Governor and the leadership in the House and Senate to draw State Districts that are representative of the demographics, and give racial minorities an opportunity to elect representatives of their choice –which is one the basic principles of the Voting Rights Act.

At the Federal level, the Caucus is particularly concerned about possible Congressional reapportionment plans that could dilute the African American vote. With Baltimore City losing 4.7% of its population and the population growth in the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, we are adamant about ensuring and maintaining a significant African American presence. “We will be studying all Districts and will propose reapportionment plans that account for African American voter strength, as well as other racial minorities,” said Delegate Braveboy. “Redistricting in every State must comply with the Voting Rights Act; this requirement is not about partisan interest, but about equality.”

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