

Vote Everywhere
A Discussion on Voting Rights and Implications
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Speaker Bios



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John T. Willis is currently a Senior Executive in Residence in the College of Public Affairs at the University of Baltimore and a Senior Research Associate with the Schaefer Center for Public Policy. Professor Willis served as the Director of the Undergraduate Program in Government and Public Policy at the university from 2005 to 2013. He has taught courses since 1999 in American Political Thought, American Public Policy, Interest Group Politics and Lobbying, Maryland Government and Politics, Media and Government, Political Ideologies, Problem Solving in Public Administration, Public Budgeting and Personnel Management, State and Local Government, Urban Politics and Public Policy, and U.S. Campaigns and Elections. He previously taught courses as an adjunct professor in the Economics and Business Administration Department of Western Maryland College (now McDaniel College) from 1979 to 1994 and, in 2005, taught courses at McDaniel College-Budapest in Hungary. Professor Willis served as Senior Counsel at the Office of the Maryland Attorney General from January 2015 to January 2023.

From 1995 to 2003, he served as secretary of state of Maryland and was deeply involved at the state and national levels in election reform issues. He chaired Maryland's Special Committee on Voting Systems and Election Procedures, which led to landmark legislation and implementation of election reform measures in 2001. He also served on the Commission to Revise the Election Code, which modernized and re-codified Maryland's election laws.

UBalt Smart Talks

Willis wants voters to participate, he says in an installment of the [UBalt Smart Talks video series](#); November 2012. He has conducted extensive research on Maryland political history, elections and demographics and have authored several publications and significant reports. He wrote *Presidential Elections in Maryland*, was a contributing author to *Western Maryland: A Profile* and co-authored the book, *Maryland Government and Politics*, by the University of Nebraska press as part of a series.

As an active member of the National Association of Secretaries of State, he served as regional vice president and on several election-related committees, including the Special Committee of Presidential Primaries, and as vice chair of the Elections and Voter Participation Committee and the Election Reform Task Force, created in response to issues raised during the 2000 presidential election. He also served on the Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee on Election Reform of the Council of State Governments.

In 2004, he was an invited participant in the Workshop on Electronic Voting conducted by the National Research Council. He also designed and supervised the grant awarded to the University of Baltimore by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission for the Help America Vote College Program, which successfully recruited, trained and placed college students as election judges and election assistants for the 2004 presidential general election.

In 2011, Professor Willis was retained to assist the Baltimore City Council in its redistricting process for the drawing of city council district lines. This task involved attending numerous public hearings and meetings as well as drafting proposals of council district boundary lines for consideration by the Baltimore City Council. He provided analysis of the city council redistricting plans proposed by the Mayor of Baltimore City, council members and the public and prepared a lengthy report with maps. Professor Willis chaired the 2010 Citizens Committee for Baltimore City to coordinate with the U.S. Census Bureau and work with advocacy groups, businesses, city agencies, community, and neighborhood groups to secure the maximum participation of Baltimore City residents in the 2010 Census. In 2020, Professor Willis again worked with the Baltimore City Complete Count Committee in conjunction with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Professor Willis submitted an expert report on May 8, 2017, and subsequently gave a deposition, in a case filed in the United States District Court for the District of Maryland (Benisek v. Lamone, Case No. 13-ev-3233) that challenged the state's 2012 congressional redistricting statute. The case was ultimately decided in favor of the state's redistricting law by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 27, 2019, in conjunction with another reported case, Rucho v. Common Cause, 139 S. Ct. 2482 (2019)

He has been a frequent contributor to broadcast and print media and have testified on numerous occasions before federal and state legislative and executive committees. Before the passage of the Help America Vote Act, he was invited to present testimony to the U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs Committee and Committee on Commerce, Science and Technology and to the Congressional Black Caucus. Lastly, he was the editor of *Election Administration Reports* from 2009 to 2021, an eight-page bi-monthly newsletter read around the world by election administrators and the election community.

Professor Willis received his Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Bucknell University (cum laude) in 1968 and his Juris Doctor from the Harvard Law School in 1971, with an emphasis on Constitutional Law. Since 1972, Professor Willis has been a member of the Maryland State Bar Association. Professor Willis has argued cases before the Maryland Court of Special Appeals and the Maryland Court of Appeals as well as federal district courts and circuit courts of appeals. He is married to Kathy S. Mangan, a published poet and professor emeritus at McDaniel College. He has two children and three grandchildren.



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Being a latecomer to teaching heightens my appreciation for the exchange of ideas in the classroom. I spent the early part of my career as a programmer, supervisor, and manager in information technology, working for EDS (remembered these days only for its founder, Ross Perot, who ran for president in 1992 and 1996).

Getting my MBA enabled me to swap COBOL (programming language) for spreadsheets by becoming a government contractor, where I consulted with federal agencies, chiefly the U.S. Courts, for more than a dozen years. Conducting cost-benefit analysis and developing programmatic and financial documents for government clients served as an entrée to bureaucratic life: engendering an enduring respect for public servants. They deal with profound deficits of resources and excesses of guidance, yet manage to further the public interest. Learning the conceptual language to analyze public and nonprofit missions and their political and organizational processes required a doctoral degree in public administration, which took 10 years. Definitely worth it, because of getting to teach at The University of Baltimore!

After obtaining my graduate education while working, UBalt's mission always made perfect sense. The part-time student's challenges are second nature. I love teaching, while remembering what it feels like from the other side, and do my best to keep the learning experience mutual, engaging and light. It's an honor, as D.P.A. program director, to pick up where treasured colleagues—Drs. Patria de Lancer Julnes, George Julnes, and Aaron Wachhaus—left off. Because the only way to teach or lead others pursuing a research degree is as a fellow researcher, my two decades of scholarship on Social Security continue.

My wife and sweetheart of 40+ years and I have restored a century-old house in the Shenandoah Valley. Our son became a college academic advisor and success coach, following a half-dozen years of teaching English literature, and has published books of poetry and literary criticism.