



**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES**

**House Bill 1056**

**Racing and Community Development Act of 2020**

**February 5, 2020**

**Favorable with Amendment**

**Aminta H. Breaux, Ph.D., President**

Chairs McIntosh and Kaiser, Vice Chairs Jackson and Washington, as President of Bowie State University, I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 1056. Among many important provisions relating to the racing industry in Maryland, House Bill 1056 would establish a Task Force on the Future of the Bowie Training Center Property, located less than two miles from the Bowie State University campus in Prince George's County. I respectfully request that Bowie State be added to this task force.

In early fall 2019, I became aware of the Stronach Group's interest in potentially donating to Bowie State University a portion of the Bowie Training Center property as part of the overall plan to enhance the racing industry and preserve the Preakness®. Naturally, I was and remain, interested in such a donation. As Maryland's first historically black college or university, and the only one located in Prince George's County, Bowie State is uniquely positioned to take advantage of this rare opportunity. This property would support the university's educational goals and our vision to connect the university to the larger community.

The university would build recreational facilities to enhance the experience of our growing student population and to deepen our connection to the City of Bowie and the surrounding community. Our desire is for multi-purpose athletic fields, which we would make available to the local community, consistent with our mission as a public university. We would offer academic camps and sports camps along with other summer enrichment activities for families and local nonprofits along with a facility to support our Sport Management program. We would also pursue innovative community-based initiatives connected to the environment and supportive of sustainable best practices in the areas of water quality, natural resource conservation, and "farm-to-table" programs to complement our academic programs in the natural sciences.

We have a growing Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program that could benefit greatly from this property. Currently, our Army ROTC Cadets have to travel up to two hours from campus, as far away as Virginia, to complete mandatory field training (at a cost of approximately \$9,000 per year) because we lack the appropriate outdoor spaces to meet their needs. Attached to my testimony is a letter from Lieutenant Colonel Wesley N. Knight, Professor of Military Science for the BSU Army ROTC program underscoring the need for more land to support our Cadets as they prepare to become commissioned officers to serve our country.

The university used a portion of the Bowie Training Facility property for overflow parking for our 2019 spring commencement ceremony. This helped us alleviate concerns by many students and parents about our capacity to accommodate guests as we planned bring our spring commencement back to campus after years of holding it on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park. This partnership contributed to our successful commencement, and I am extremely grateful for the owners' willingness to assist the university in this way.

Connecting our historic institution to the community is an important part of our mission as a public university for the public good. We would ensure that our neighboring community and the larger community has access to the various programs and opportunities that this property would afford us.

Bowie State's strategic plan entitled, "Racing to Excellence" includes strategic priorities that ensure the long-term viability of the institution. As a regional economic engine, Bowie State is one of the largest employers in the Bowie vicinity. Acquisition of the Bowie Training Facility Property would help secure the future of the institution and create more opportunities for economic growth in the community. I urge the committees to give Bowie State University a seat at the table to examine the future of this property.

Attachment



REPLY TO

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS (ROTC)  
BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY  
14000 JERICHO PARK ROAD  
BOWIE, MARYLAND 20715-9465**

January 16, 2020

Dear President Breaux,

I strongly recommend adding more land to the campus of Bowie State University. This addition would benefit the Reserve Officer' Training Corps (ROTC) Program by significantly reducing costs and enhancing training. By reducing costs and enhancing training, the BSU ROTC program will be able to better accomplish our mission of recruiting, training, and commissioning Second Lieutenants in to the United States Army, U.S. Army Reserves, and the Maryland National Guard. With better quality training, we can continue to grow and improve the BSU ROTC program, as well as surrounding Junior ROTC High School programs, to ensure our cadets and students are prepared for the challenges they will face either in the Army or in their civilian professional careers.

Currently, the BSU ROTC program must travel outside of campus to conduct required training to prepare our cadets to be commissioned officers. Due to the limited land on campus to conduct most military training, we typically travel to either Gunpowder Military Reservation (1-hour commute) or Marine Corps Base Quantico (2-hour commute). We use these two training areas approximately 7-8 times a year due to our land constraints on the Bowie State Campus. The ability to train on campus would save the program approximately 2-4 hours of transit time that can be used for additional training or quality of life for the cadets. Additionally, the BSU ROTC program is required to pay for administrative and transportation costs to these locations. These expenses typically cost the program approximately \$9,000 a year to train our 86-cadets.

With additional campus area, we could begin using the campus for our critical training events, reducing the costs to the program, as well as the cadet's time traveling to and from distant training areas. Additionally, the program could reinvest those transportation and land use costs to enhance training for the cadets and build necessary military training aids such as obstacle courses and rappel towers. These enhancements and training aids would better prepare the cadets for other ROTC training, and most importantly, for their careers as Army officers.

In summary, additional land will immensely benefit the BSU ROTC program by saving time, money, and resources that will be applied elsewhere. Please consider ROTC in making this key decision.

If there are any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 301-323-3341 or [wknight@bowiestate.edu](mailto:wknight@bowiestate.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wesley N. Knight". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'W' and 'K'.

WESLEY N. KNIGHT  
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army  
Professor of Military Science



February 24, 2020

Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House  
Maryland General Assembly  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

As you may be aware, the Bowie State University Foundation's (the "Foundation") primary purpose is to facilitate fundraising programs and contributions from private (and public) sources to promote and support Bowie State University's (the "University") academic and programmatic goals. As such, I am writing on behalf of the Foundation's Board of Directors to express our strong support for the current proposal being debated before the General Assembly to transfer -- what is commonly referred to as -- the "Bowie Horse Training Facility" to the University. As discussed in greater detail below, we strongly believe that the land transfer aligns perfectly with the University's goals and, most importantly, enable it to enhance program offerings to current students, which is a key objective for the Foundation's activities.

The University has made great strides in recent years. The physical plant continues to improve with the addition of the new Center for Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Nursing building. At the same time, there are still areas for improvement. For example, it is our understanding that a portion of the land will be used to support the University's Reserve Officers Training Corps ("ROTC") program. Currently, ROTC candidates travel over 50 miles to the Quantico Marine base for certain aspects of their training. If the current proposal is approved, the University plans to develop a ropes course which will eliminate the need for students to travel for this key component of their training. Though a new ropes course may appear to be a small thing, the ability to train on campus and minimize disruptions to other academic pursuits will be invaluable to those future defenders of our nation. This is just one worthy example of how the University will use the land transfer to make Bowie State a first-class institution in our great state.

*14000 Jericho Park Rd, Bowie, Maryland 20715  
P: 301-860-4314 F:301-860-4159*

Again, all of the Foundation's programming is dedicated to providing the University with the resources it needs to be successful, and, in our opinion, this current land transfer proposal is an important piece of the overall strategy for success. Thus, in the end, it is our hope that the General Assembly will do its part to help President Breaux and her team as they "Race towards Excellence" and support the land transfer proposal.

Thank you in advance for your attention and consideration of this letter and, if you have questions regarding the letter on any aspect of the role that the Foundation can play in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Sampson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gordon Sampson  
Foundation Chair



BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY  
NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INC.



February 3, 2020

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Honorable Bill Ferguson, President of the Senate  
Honorable Adrienne Jones, Speaker of the House  
Maryland General Assembly  
State House  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Bowie Horse Training Facility

Dear President Ferguson and Speaker Jones:

The Bowie State University National Alumni Association (BSUNAA) fully supports all efforts by Bowie State University to acquire and develop the property known as "the Bowie Horse Training Facility" in connection with the plan to keep the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore. Donation of the Bowie facility would further the mission and goals of the University by allowing it to enhance student academic and recreational programs and increase the University's outreach to the community.

BSUNAA encourages unified efforts by the Bowie State University Administration, City of Bowie, Prince George's County and the State of Maryland to maximize the opportunity to make this property available to the broader community in support of programs, facilities and functionality that will allow for uses that support the goals of the University and increase community quality of life.

Sincerely,

*Ricardo C. Mitchell*

Ricardo C. Mitchell, President  
BSUNAA, Inc.

Cc: Honorable Angela Alsobrooks  
Honorable Tim Adams  
Honorable Guy Guzzone  
Honorable Maggie McIntosh  
Prince George's County Delegation  
Dr. Aminta H. Breaux