

My name is Mark Gochnour and I live in Germantown, Md, at 18937 Red Robin Terrace.

(You may have my testimony but those in the gallery do not, so I would like to share it.) *On HB No 28*

Have you ever heard of Repudiation Day? The Maryland General Assembly made it a holiday in 1894. It was done to remember the day in 1765 when Frederick County judges agreed that they would not enforce the Stamp Act to pay tax monies to the British Government. How about the *Peggy Stewart*? In the harbor of this city in 1774, that boat and its contents were burned because the colonists were protesting the tax on tea.

I am not suggesting violent protest to stop what this assembly is doing, I am just acquainting you that we American do not like paying taxes. We don't like paying taxes because we don't believe the money will be spent wisely, or like the percentage, the method, or agree with the planned purpose. We used to protest before we were a country that we were being taxed without representation, D.C license plates remind us of that still, but now we have elected representatives that persist on inflicting burdensome taxes on Maryland residents every chance they get. At least, now we don't have a Royal Governor who supports this concept. Thank you, Governor Hogan for reducing our taxation with representation.

How can we trust you with additional money on pie in the sky ideas? You keep coming up with new ways to tax the residents and in so doing driving people and businesses out of the state which places a greater

burden on those who remain. You need to start reducing the services that you think we should pay for and our residents need to stop expecting the government to force others to pay for their life choices.

Always the mantra - its for the children! Tug at the heart strings of people. If this was so, how come you eliminated most of the shop classes, the home economics classes, the typing, auto mechanic and cosmetology classes in the high schools? Instead you wanted everyone to go to college! Now you see what a mistake that was and now want us to support and allow taxes on the very service businesses you want to train students to work in. Seems ironic.

I find it interesting that near where I live the Seneca Valley High School is being rebuilt and this has been going on for I guess two years but of course the planning for much longer. MCPS is building basically a second Edison Center which is housed in Wheaton High, the school where I graduated from in 1972. They are doing so without the Kirwan tax money. Auto mechanics and like classes will be taught there, so students will hopefully no longer be bused to and from Poolesville to Wheaton taking a huge chunk out of their day when they could be learning.

Since 1973, over one million babies have been aborted in Maryland. These murdered children and their progeny would have provided more money, more employees, more future to this state and world but you have encouraged the exact opposite of the slogan "its for the children."

You and others claim it is about the kids but you have cried wolf for too many years at kid and taxpayer expense. The gambling money was supposed to go to the schools yet that money went elsewhere and the schools, teachers, and students were shorted. In the real world that is called misappropriation of funds or embezzlement. Thank you, Governor Hogan for putting an end to those actions.

With the focus on college for some many students for over 50 years, you have put an educational burden on too many students and, in many cases, you have driven them away from schools as well as destroyed their potential for life long learning. I am glad someone finally realized not everyone should go to college and not every student should be in honors classes. Encourage students who are struggling with high expectations beyond their abilities to learn what is needed, to pass the GED and get out of school instead of keeping them until “graduation” so it looks good for the school system. Create another category for successful education.

I have been involved in education for most of ny life, first as a student, then as a children’s librarian, and now, I work in the schools as a substitute teacher. I work with kindergarteners to high schoolers and with many Special Ed students in reading, support, and in ESOL. By promoting children to higher grades in elementary schools so as to not embarrass them or have them bullied, they move upwards without having learned the basics of reading, writing, and math. This hurts their ability to learn as they continue their schooling and, potentially, for the rest of their lives. The other day, I worked with a student in a classroom who could not write alphabetic letters and he was in 3rd grade. I asked him what was harder

reading or writing and he said “Both”. That answer came after he resisted me from working on an assignment for over 30 minutes. And he is not the only one like this.

Too many children are turned over to the school to educate by law, yet the parents have not participated in preparing their children to be ready to learn or support them during their schooling. It’s not just critical thinking and hand motor skills, the area that is of most concern for me, is the socialization skills, which they arrive in kindergarten without. They are undisciplined, they cannot sit still, they abuse other children and teachers and the foul language they speak to others is disgusting. These actions disrupt the class and prevent the learning by other classmates. There is a law which states that anyone who disrupts the education of students is guilty of a crime. Well, start enforcing it on parents whose children make it difficult for others to learn. Sitting them in Office is not helping them to be educated; start holding them and their parents accountable. I have a theory, which I call the Peter Pan Syndrome based on my observations in classrooms. I believe some students don’t want to learn as an act of protest to growing up because they don’t like what they see around them.

So you want to raise taxes so as to pay for your Education Blue Print. Theory is fine, but the technique and follow through (with more administrators hired not necessarily teachers or para-educators), is not for the best way and the huge tax increase promoted by the Kirwan Commission is not be the best answer/solution. No, to any more tax increases! Cut spending elsewhere if you want to the Blueprint. Figure out where in the current budget to get the money without creating new

taxes. This BluePrint needs tossed out or scaled down. Programs need to be set up in the county systems but not so ambitiously or massively. Start small, prove the method is successful, then expand the program. I am curious, though, where are the school systems going to find the required number of teachers with qualified VoTech certification and skills? Why would they want to teach when they can make more money in private business? Are we going to hire those who could not make in those fields? What makes you think they can teach enthusiastically, keeping students engaged and involved in learning? My solution - send the students out of the high school prepared and with stipends to pursue their chosen Votech education. That way, the schools don't have create, at taxpayer expense, the massive infrastructure to support those programs they abandoned years ago.

And one more thing; you want to increase our taxes but Montgomery County will insist on increasing my property tax to pay for the greater expenses of education that got missed by this planned BluePrint, so I will be taxed doubly to produce the same outcome. Annually, I get a letter from my delegation that shares what happened while this body was in session. Included is how much money was obtained for Montgomery County. This gloating is supposed to be supported by us but we must not been educated properly in our schools because we fail to recognize those funds are coming out of our wallets sometimes at the expense of the smaller counties not getting their fair share.

When students are miseducated, lifelong learning interest is squelched, sometimes before the 3rd grade. A child's education should not be squandered. Do right; because after all, it is for the children and their future which impacts all of us.

Thank you for listening.