



NAACP

Baltimore County Maryland

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
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February 9, 2021

Honorable Paul G. Pinsky

Chair

Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Pinsky,

This is to express the opposition of The Baltimore County Branch of The NAACP to Senate Bill 468. The reasons for this opposition include, but are not limited to the following:

- 1.) The proposed deprivation of funds, for reasons arbitrarily deemed as constituting fraud, waste and/or abuse, interferes with The County's duty to provide a free, public education to its students. This duty must be met in a manner equal to that provided by the other Maryland Jurisdictions. Senate Bill 468 would violate the students' right to a free, quality, public education as guaranteed by The U.S. Constitution. This violation would expose The State to litigation, under This Bill.
- 2.) The Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) was the subject of a ransomware attack in November, 2020. The Baltimore Sun printed an article on the ransomware attack on December 11th, 2020. The article was written by Alison Knezevich and Lillian Reed, Sun Reporters. The reporters quoted a letter from Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski. The quoted language said, "Law Enforcement was not involved in the decision made by either BCPS or its third-party consultants to contact the (ransomware) attackers." In his response, School Superintendent Darryl Williams said that his team communicated with The Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI,) throughout the entire ransomware debacle. The Olszewski letter ended by saying that "There will be legal, financial, and reputational consequences to an independent decision by BCPS to pay the ransom."
- 3.) Clearly, BCPS preferred the support of The Federal Bureau Of Investigation (F.B.I.) to that of The Baltimore County Police Department (BCoPD). It appears, then, that Senate Bill 468 represents the promised retaliation of Johnny Olszewski. Hence, The Maryland State Legislature is being asked to intervene in

a local, executive branch dispute. This may violate at least the spirit of Separation of Powers as set forth in The Constitution.

- 4.) The State Inspector General (IG) has the authority to find fraud, waste and/or, abuse by any State Agency with no action by The Legislature. The same is true of The Baltimore County IG. Still, neither office has found misconduct on the part of The Baltimore County Public Schools in the context of either the ransomware attack or otherwise. What then is the real motive of Senate Bill 468? We believe racism is the motive. Dr. Williams is African-American. Increasing numbers of minority students attend Baltimore County Public Schools. For these reasons as well, SB 468 should not pass out of this committee.

The Baltimore County NAACP makes these statements after studying all of the surrounding facts and circumstances. We make these statements on behalf of all of the citizens and students of Baltimore County, Maryland. Therefore, the Baltimore County NAACP respectfully requests the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee issue an unfavorable report for SB 468. We are available for your convenience at the address and telephone number set forth above.

Thank-you for your time and consideration.

Earnestly submitted,

Danita Tolson

Danita Tolson, President
Baltimore County NAACP