

To whom it may concern,

These last two academic years have had many highs and lows for me. Coming out of quarantine and the most unexpected life experience of 2020 due to COVID-19, I was so excited to return to in-person learning and bring back some normalcy to my athletic routine. Even before virtual learning ended, I jumped at the opportunity to participate in a Southern Maryland 7vs7 league my football coach shared with the team.

After struggling academically for the first half of my freshman year, I returned to high school and made the honor roll. Having the assistance of the staff and faculty and access to my coaches and teammates motivated me to be a better student and leader. As an athlete it is important for me to have a structured routine. After already missing out on our first year of high school football, my teammates and I looked forward to start the 2021 season. We practiced daily during the summer months leading up to the school year and I was presented the opportunity to become quarterback. Even though I have had interest in this position in the past, I never formally played as QB so taking on the new role was very important to me. Any chance I could have extra training with my neighborhood friends/teammates I took it. I also made sure to stay on top of my grades because not only is it school requirement, my aunt likes to remind me that I am a student athlete and student comes first.

When I first heard about the charges being brought against me I was shocked. I knew that I didn't do anything so I looked forward to having the hearing and moving on. I started my 10th grade year and continued training for football. Then came the sudden news that I was to be removed from my home school and start classes at the alternative school, the day before my first home football game as QB in high school. At first I didn't even understand why, then I learned it was from a situation I was accused of months ago that I didn't even do. My aunt met with the vice-principal and wrote an appeal letter to keep me in school but nothing changed. Going to the alternative school has been a challenge due to the time difference and class schedule. I had to drop an elective course to make sure I didn't lose any main classes. I also have had to get transportation from my aunt or my home school staff on days when my transfer bus leaves before my home bus arrives. Thankfully the teachers at the alternative school turned out to be really cool and I made sure to stay focused in class to not ruin my chances of returning to sports at my home school. It hurt me to not only miss my entire season of football and basketball and now track not only as a player but even a spectator because I was told I could not be on school grounds. I feel like I have been cheated out what was supposed to be the beginning of an amazing year. I was excited to return to my home school but can't help to remember the things that were already lost and pray that they don't negatively impact my future.

Thank you,

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