



Tc4health@gmail.com
www.qualequityaccess.com

January 27, 2026

BILL: HB 116 – Education - Agreements, Procurement Contracts, and Memoranda of Understanding - Reporting and Publication

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: Favorable with Amendment

RE: Statement of Support with Requested Amendments

Dear Chairwoman Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, Delegate Miller and Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am Alita-Geri Carter, the owner of Qualequity Access, LLC., a consultancy grounded in data-driven transformation that advocates for quality, equity, access, and accessibility in healthcare and education. I am the mother of two children with disabilities, a former practicing nursing practitioner, special education parent advocate, and public health servant.

I am writing to express my support for the transparency goals of **House Bill 116**. For too long, the execution of multi-million-dollar contracts and "in-kind" agreements has occurred behind closed doors, leaving parents and taxpayers with no way to evaluate whether our school systems are prioritizing student outcomes or institutional convenience.

While I support the bill's intent, I am concerned about specific **loopholes** that could undermine the law:

1. **The "Information Withheld by Law" Loophole:** Section 2-307(B)(2) exempts contracts that include information that "may be withheld from disclosure by law". This phrasing is overly broad and allows school systems to shield entire contracts if a single line-item is deemed confidential.
 - **Requested Amendment:** Require that contracts be published with **limited redactions** rather than being exempted in their entirety.
2. **Lack of Real-Time Accountability:** The bill allows for a compilation report to be issued annually by October 1. In a fast-moving school year, an annual report is a post-mortem, not a tool for active oversight.
 - **Requested Amendment:** Require all non-exempt contracts to be posted to the local school system's website within **14 business days** of execution, rather than 30.

The Human Cost of Contractual Failure

Transparency is not an abstract concept; it has a direct impact on student safety and dignity. During the **2024-2025 school year**, we witnessed a total collapse of school bus transportation services in Prince George's County Public Schools.

- **Stranded Students:** Children were left waiting for 3 to 4 hours, and in many cases, buses never arrived.



Tc4health@gmail.com
www.qualequityaccess.com

- **Financial Burden on Families:** Parents were forced to pay out-of-pocket for Lyfts and Ubers to ensure their children reached school safely.
- **Dignity and Safety:** Combined routes forced Pre-K and Kindergarten students to sit on buses for 2+ hours, leading to humiliating toileting accidents.

When leadership is unwilling to provide answers on the execution of these contracts, it creates a crisis of trust. Without the transparency mandated by HB 116, parents have no way to see the performance requirements or penalty clauses that should have protected our children.

Personal Testimony: Conflicts of Interest

In light of these extreme circumstances, parents, community members, and advocates have repeatedly sought information regarding the failures of agreements funded by our taxpayer dollars. Yet, we have not received a dignified response. Instead, we are forced to navigate a burdensome process: filing Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests, enduring delays that exceed 30 days and violate the law and requesting mediation. We then wait for 90 days or longer as required by statute before we can even file a complaint with the Public Information Act Compliance Board. Even then, we may not achieve the transparency and accountability our tax dollars, communities members, families, and students demand.

Conclusion

HB 116 is a vital step toward reclaiming public oversight of our education budget. By closing these loopholes, we can ensure that school leadership remains focused on the only metric that matters: the well-being and success of our students.

I respectfully urge a Favorable with Amendments report on HB 116.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alita-Geri Carter, MSN, DNP-C, CPNP-PC, BCPA
Resident, Howard County, MD