


Reply all | Delete Junk |

Council Bill CR 180

SN  Shah, Nancy
Yesterday, 12:19 PM
CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin B

Reply all |

Keep

November 21, 2016

Dear County Council Members,

I fully support Council Bill CR 180 in reference to the hiring, promotional, and retention practices of Howard County Public Safety and Schools.

As a white female who has been with the Howard County Sheriff's Office for over 34 years, I was passed over for promotion several times. I feel the previous Sheriff used the issue of non-political/election support to be a deciding factor in promotions, which is discrimination against those individuals who wished to remain impartial.

I think Council Bill CR 180 will be essential in helping to obtain promotional equality for ALL Howard County employees. I'm sure all of you are aware of the recent O.H.R. report on the former Sheriff's unfair treatment towards some of his employees. In light of this, I feel it is of the utmost importance that fairness, equality, diversity, and seniority be considered in the hiring, promotion, and retention process.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope you will support Council Bill CR 180.

Respectfully submitted,
Deputy Nancy Shah,
Howard County Sheriff's Office

Written Testimony: CR 180 Hiring Practices Legislation



Matthew Vaughn-Smith <vsmithhcpss@gmail.com>

Yesterday, 8:00 PM

CouncilMail

Reply all |

Keep

MVS_testimony_CR180-...

179 KB

Download

To Whom it May Concern:

Please find below and attached my written testimony of support for CR 180 Hiring Practices. I apologize that I could not be there in person to deliver my comments, but I have parent teacher conferences until 8 pm this evening:

Good Evening Howard County Council Chair Dr. Calvin Ball and members of the County Council. My name is Matthew Vaughn-Smith, an African American male reading specialist at Forest Ridge Elementary School where close to 80% of the student population is non-white. I am before you today to speak in support of County Council Resolution 180-16 which calls for a report on the equity of hiring practices of county agencies, including the Howard County Public School System. Let me start with a little background about myself. I attended Howard County Schools for kindergarten through 12th grades, having graduated from Long Reach High School in 2004. During my tenure in the Howard County Public School System, I could count on my fingers the number of educators I have had that were of color. Today, the numbers have not changed much. As of 2015, over 75% of certificated staff in Howard County are white. I do recall however, one teacher of color named Mr. Olney who left an indelible impression on my life. An English teacher, Mr. Olney was well versed in his craft, teaching us how to accurately use commonly misused words in the English language and how to read dense novels efficiently. However, Mr. Olney brought to the classroom three things that made him most memorable. First, he inspired others like myself to teach. Being an African American male himself, he showed me that I too could aspire to be a teacher like him. Secondly, Mr. Olney

brought a balanced perspective. Because of his cultural background and his depth of historical knowledge, he was able to counteract the often Eurocentric viewpoints that permeate our curriculum. As a result, all students in his class - white and non white alike - broadened their worldviews. Finally, having Mr. Olney as a teacher instilled in me a love for reading and writing. I was always exceptional when it came to language arts, but I did not enjoy reading and writing - it was a necessary evil to get through school. Mr. Olney changed that. He exposed me to literature that was not of the traditional cannon. I remember reading *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin and Mr. Olney being able to bring the account to life by making parallels between his own experiences and those of the journalist who went undercover as a black man in the Deep South during Jim Crow.

Consequently, I would argue that the future of our school system depends upon recruiting and retaining educators of color like Mr. Olney. Increasing the number of educators of color will provide role models for students of color. Like myself, students of color need to see themselves in competent leadership roles in the school system so that they can aspire to those same roles. Moreover, recruiting educators of color has positive impact on the worldviews of white students. A 2007 study showed that white students ages 10-19 had the same amount of implicit racial bias as older generations. Giving them educators of color as teachers gives them opportunity to experience and see 'black competence' in order to combat their implicit biases. Finally, hiring and retaining educators of color will help to close the achievement and opportunity gaps between black and Latino students and their white peers. Statistically, it has been proven that high quality educators of color are often sent to schools that are high needs because of an internal obligation they feel to give back to their communities. As a result, they are able to meet the needs of our most struggling students - students that some white educators do not feel comfortable teaching. I encourage each and every one of you to lift up the importance of hiring and retaining educators of color by voting in favor of this resolution. Thank you.

Thank you for your kind consideration,

Mr. Matthew Vaughn-Smith, M.Ed.-REED
 Maryland State Educator and Activist
 Howard County Educator
 Twitter: @mvsactivates

Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. ~ Nelson Mandela

Please don't print. Think Green and Read off the Screen :)