

Good evening, and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify. My name is Daniel Newberger, and I am a resident of Columbia, District 4. There is one aspect of CB79 that I would like to discuss this evening, and that concerns the relationship between the prospective landlord and the County Executive.

The warehouse at 9515 Gerwig Lane is owned by Merritt Properties through the Merritt-HR LLC. Merritt Properties is part of Merritt Companies, a holding company that also owns Merritt Construction Services and Merritt Clubs. Since 2009, Merritt has contributed over \$30,000 to the Campaign to Elect Allan Kittleman, through various limited liability companies as well as a personal donation by its CEO. Additionally, Merritt hosted a campaign event for the Campaign to Elect Allan Kittleman in November, 2013.

So CB79, which is being sponsored by the Council Chairperson at the request of County Executive Allan Kittleman, proposes to spend over \$1.2 million to store the county's voting machines in a warehouse owned and operated by a major partisan political supporter of... County Executive Allan Kittleman.

I'm not here to accuse the county's dedicated and talented career civil servants of any behavior that is illegal, unethical, or untoward. But I believe that the County Council has a responsibility to exert a very high degree of scrutiny and oversight over CB79 given the relationship at the heart of the bill between Merritt and County Executive Kittleman.

There are many questions that should be answered before this bill is approved, including: Did the county conduct an open solicitation before it chose the Merritt property? (And if so, was the Request For Proposals written in such a way to allow for real competition? And, how did the other bids received compare to Merritt's?) How does the amount of rent that the county proposes to pay to Merritt compare to rent for similar warehouse spaces on the market? What kind of safeguards will the County Board of Elections put in place to protect the integrity of the voting machines while they are in the custody of the Merritt Companies, a corporation that is clearly not neutral when it comes to the outcomes of Howard County elections?

Again, I'm not accusing anyone of anything nefarious. Unfortunately, CB79 just looks like business as usual in today's Howard County, but business as usual does not look like good government. Please do not rubber stamp CB79. Ask the hard questions, and demand real answers.

Thank you.

**Merritt contributions to the Campaign to Elect Allan Kittleman**

Date	Contributor	Contributor Address	Amount
10/8/2009	Merritt - 001, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 250.00
1/7/2011	Merritt - 001, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 250.00
10/6/2011	Merritt - 002, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 1,000.00
12/30/2011	Merritt - 002, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 250.00
1/7/2013	Merritt - 016, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 1,000.00
12/9/2013	Merritt - 025 LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 1,574.67
1/8/2014	Merritt -037 LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 4,000.00
4/29/2014	Merritt - 038 LLC	2066 Lord Blatimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 4,000.00
6/2/2014	Merritt - 057 LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 1,000.00
8/18/2014	Merritt - 014 LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 4,000.00
8/18/2014	Merritt - 017 LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 4,000.00
10/27/2014	Merritt - 058 LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 2,500.00
4/5/2015	Merritt - 002, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 1,000.00
5/19/2015	Scott Dorsey	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 500.00
6/25/2015	Merritt - 001, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 500.00
12/9/2015	Merritt - 001, LLC	2066 Lord Baltimore Drive, Baltimore, MD 21244	\$ 4,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 30,324.67</b>

All data from the Maryland Campaign Reporting Information System, Maryland State Board of Elections