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CR112 Testimony

For Howard County Public Hearing

Feiming Chen, Ph.D.

September 18, 2019

The Distance Principle and Social-Economic Integration

Social-economic balkanization of the classrooms is a real problem and a *threat* to our democratic society, but the solutions (such as **CR112**¹) should *not* include the *gerrymandering* of school districts.

Because in school redistricting, we should follow a basic principle: Do *not* unnecessarily increase the *distance* for a student to travel to a school. I call it the "distance principle" and it should be the *primary* consideration in the redistricting process: a longer distance is warranted only when there is a capacity utilization problem or other immediate concerns.

If we ignore the distance principle and generate gerrymandered school districts just for the sake of the social-economic integration "imperative", then we will bring undue *stress* to countless students and parents, a stress caused by extensive travel time to school. When a student could go to a nearby school, but instead have to go to a school further away, this means less sleep time, longer travel time, worse traffic congestion, elevated traffic-induced anxiety, and more environmental pollution. Therefore, we should respect the distance principle in the school redistricting process.

With regards to the social-economic integration, I believe there are better ways to achieve it². For example, if we can design a better system that includes **ranked school choices** by parents, attractive **magnet school programs**, and **student exchange** programs, then we may achieve better social-economic integration in the classrooms more *efficiently*.

In summary, it is a *pitfall* to attempt the social-economic integration through the school redistricting and boundary review process, because it tends to violate the distance principle and results in gerrymandered school districts. Instead, we should promote **social-economic integration** through a well-designed, *incentivised* system and people's *free choices*.

¹CR112: Council Resolution 112-2019. Introduced by Christiana Mercer Rigby, Opel Jones and Deb Jung - A RESOLUTION requesting the Howard County Public School System to draft, approve, and implement a lawful multi-year Integration Plan to ensure that Howard County Public Schools are integrated by socioeconomic factors.

²Kahlenberg, Richard D., et al. "Socioeconomic Integration from an Equity Perspective." Center for Education Equity, Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (2017). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED585403.pdf>

September 18, 2019

Dear County Council Members:

My name is Audrey Fernandes and I am here to oppose CR 112.

Howard County is one of the most racially and socioeconomically diverse and inclusive counties in our nation.

I live in perhaps the most racially diverse neighborhoods in the county represented by a mix of African American, African, Asian, Latino, White and Southern Asian families. As a woman of color I am angered and insulted by the racial implications of the CR112 proposal. We are not living in a post slavery period where racial desegregation needs to be addressed.

Socioeconomic discrepancies are not foreign to my family or my neighborhood. I immigrated to this country from East Africa at the age of 9. I grew up in apartment complexes. I was a "latch key kid" without a stay-at-home parent. Our socioeconomic status would not permit before & after care or after-school programs. My parents immigrated to this country so I could be given a good education and more opportunities to succeed.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is one of the most successful in the state and the nation. As our Superintendent has said "all Howard County schools are excellent." Kids from all socioeconomic backgrounds have the same access to the same great teachers and same curriculum. Our Howard County schools do not segregate in providing a better or worse education to the rich versus poor. There are no inequalities in our education system or lack of access to education. Everyone is offered the same public education.

Where inequity can occur is outside of the school where family resources may not be able to provide for before & after care, after-school enrichment programs and tutoring. Families from all socioeconomic backgrounds work hard and make sacrifices, but some will need assistance in providing these types of resources for their children.

Listen to your constituents from lower socioeconomic income areas:

We are asking for before & after care in cases where it cannot be afforded or not offered due to lack of enrollement. In other cases, there is a cap on the number of kids allowed to enroll.



Howard County Council Public Hearing: Council Resolution 112-2019

September 18, 2019

Testimony

Good evening Council Chair Rigby and Council Members. ACS is proud to serve as the collective voice for over 160 member organizations and advocates. Throughout our 56-year history, we have advocated on behalf of Howard County's nonprofit human service, cultural, environmental and faith-based organizations and the individuals and families that they serve.

Recognizing that all Howard County parents want to create the best possible opportunity for their children to succeed, I am proud, as Executive Director of ACS, to express our support for Council Resolution 112-2019. We are incredibly lucky to live in a county that is beautifully diverse – culturally, racially, and economically. It is a County with the capacity to prepare all of our children to take their place in the cooperative economy of the 21st century where the ability to work in groups, to incorporate diverse perspectives and to innovate in ways that meet the needs of many is the key to success.

We are all familiar with the wealth of research showing that when schools are integrated, the academic performance of children from more affluent families remains steady, while those from less economically advantaged homes increases. Knowing this, it would be unconscionable to be aware of the achievement gap that currently exists in Howard County and to fail to develop a plan to integrate our schools. We have a duty to provide the best possible education for all students.

Developing a plan that will maximize the outcome for all students will require that we intentionally seek out the voices of all sectors within our community. It will require that we work to identify obstacles to success at the classroom, school, system, and community level, and that we develop and continually evaluate strategies to overcome them. It will require that we model for our children the cooperative process that we know produces the best results. Integrating our schools is not just the right thing to do, it is the best thing we can do to truly prepare our children for the world they will live in.

Thank you for the opportunity to convey our support for CR 112-2019.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Driessen

Executive Director



**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

✓ I, Joan Driessen, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Association of Community Services of Howard County to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CR 112-2019 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Joan Driessen

Signature: Joan Driessen

Date: September 12, 2019

Organization: Association of Community Services of Howard County

Organization Address: 9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 301, Columbia, MD 21046

Number of Members: 168 organizations and community advocates

Name of Chair/President: Jennifer Pollitt Hill

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.

My name is Daniel Newberger, I live in the Pointers Run neighborhood of River Hill in Columbia.

Howard County sits on the fault line of two conflicting legacies. One is the legacy of James Rouse, who envisioned Columbia as a garden for growing people — a community where people of all races, religions, and economic circumstances could live together. Howard County's other legacy is not that of Jim Rouse, but of Jim Crow. This is the Howard County which took eleven years to fully desegregate schools in defiance of Brown v. Board of Education.

Many in opposition to Resolution 112 are letting the flaws of the superintendent's plan for desegregation overshadow the goodness of this resolution's intent. And while that plan is clearly imperfect — hastily put together, flawed in many details — it speaks to the ideals and vision of this council's Resolution 112. Ironically, many in opposition do care about social justice. But apparently they will not support it if doing so means their kids go to a different school a little bit further down the road.

The research and evidence is clear — schools that are socially and economically and racially integrated produce better outcomes for all children. The resolution's opponents are either ignoring the inequity that ails our schools, or are denying that desegregation is the proven best solution, or are selfishly choosing to prioritize their families' wants over the needs of all the county's children.

In America today, it is impossible to continue denying our everyday hypocrisy. We say we believe in freedom as our neighbors are torn away from their children by armed agents of the

state. We say we believe in justice as thousands of children in this county lack the essential opportunities our own enjoy. Our true values are laid bare — we value our comfort and convenience, our preferences and privilege, over the basic needs of our neighbors.

If the past few years have taught us anything, it's that history is not done with us. Progress is not assured. The thing about gardens is, the work is not done once the seeds go into the ground. The planting is just the beginning of the story.

So how will we define our own legacy? That we fought for convenience and comfort? That we let our fears overcome our ideals?

This council holds the true power to improve educational equity, more than the Board of Education ever can. The zoning code, the affordable housing regulations, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance — these are the tools for creating a more just and equitable Howard County. Use them!

The people of Howard County have given you our trust. Earn it. Resolution 112 is a noble first step and I urge the council to pass it. But this must be just the beginning. Push harder! Work faster! This council can sit back and let business as usual rule the day, or it can stand up and fight for a more equitable, more just, Howard County. The good people of the county will join you and we will carry the day. Let's get to work, together. Thank you.

GO SLOW... Look in eye...

Hello Council. Please do not take any of my comments directed towards you individually. I know you are all very passionate and dedicated people beyond what I could ever know.

However, I find the language in this resolution divisive and frankly insulting to me as a Howard county resident. Howard county schools are in fact the least segregated in Maryland. We are a national model for diversity and inclusions. I moved here with my bi-racial family specifically for this reason.

And even though I am in support of bridging the achievement gap, I am extremely troubled by the way this resolution is written and how it is framed.

When I see mentions of slavery and other racially charged statements... I am made to feel that somehow this is directed at me and that I should feel some sort of shame ...

Then... These laundry list of WHEREAS statements (**show PROP!**) transition from race into other superfluous/random/and otherwise unrelated statements that never actually tie back to the final "ask" at the end of the document.

Essentially this is like the "sales pitch" before getting hit with the price... And similar to approach by any salesman, my antennas instinctively perk up ... Only in this case ... I get this sinking feeling that I am being **manipulated**...

The use of this intentionally incendiary and divisive language is a tactic appearing to be deployed to divert our attention from the factual content. It feels like it is being done to "play on" people's feelings and thus manipulate them into support based on "emotion rather than intellect"... If thoughtful discourse was the goal... there would be no need to infuse intentionally explosive comments to detract from factual content...

Sticking with my "sales pitch" metaphor, Now, at the end of the doc, we are hit with the "price" ,. This is where the hidden fees, and deferred payment schemes kick in... Only in this case, it is done by using vague/non-specific language so that an "exact price" can never be computed...

Here it comes, and I quote :

"Approve Integration Plan to ensure integration by socioeconomic factors"

Let's dissect this statement...

Integration: A highly overloaded term (there are over 30 meanings on the Wikipedia disambiguation page)... This term is completely open to interpretation and almost always means different things to different people...

Socioeconomic factors: Which factors exactly? There are dozens... which ones are your referring to? Which ones are you "optimizing" for achieving?

So why would I reject this "price" estimate? Because I can't compute the cost, that's why!... Might as well hook up direct deposit to my bank account.

In Conclusion: Agreeing to this resolution is tantamount to giving the board a "blank check" to interpret this vague and non-specific language as they see fit. And given the incendiary and

uneasy language used to convey this resolution I can't help but feel that a pre-concluded agenda is simply being put in motion here... And it would be irresponsible for us Howard County citizens to give the board a "blank check" until this council and the board become more transparent in this process.

While I strongly reject this resolution as it is written today, I do believe in attempting to address the achievement gap disparity in HoCo schools, and so I would be in favor of constructing a more thoughtful Resolution, with less divisive language , less superfluous commentary, and more specifics about the shared definition of "equity" (**exactly** what it means).. and then... **exactly** which socioeconomic characteristics we are focusing on balancing in the name of equity.

Thank you for your time.

Dear County Council Members,

I am writing as a taxpayer and long term community member to strongly oppose the proposed resolution no. 112-2019 (CR-112), introduced by council members Rigby, Jones etc. Coming from a socialist country, I am still appalled to see such a reckless political agenda which would negatively impact our students and communities for years to come in the name of equity and integration. I ask you to withdraw or veto this resolution and develop more constructive solutions due to so many serious flaws in this resolution:

First, I must point out that **the use of "segregated" in the resolution and press release is questionable**. It sounds all about race and social-economic balancing in the name of "integration". It's disappointing that our own elected council members would issue such a negative, bigoted message regarding our inclusive county and our fantastic school system which is recognized as leader in Maryland and the country in quality, diversity and inclusion. These inflammatory languages call to mind the shameful period of illegal racial segregation and civil right movement in the old era and stir painful and unconstructive emotions. In the backdrop of a country already ripped apart by politicians, this resolution, willingly or unwillingly, is creating the same detrimental effect, directing one group of citizen's resentments towards another group of citizens and tearing this county apart in the name of race, privilege and poverty. This alarmist approach panders to political agendas which should have no place in our kids' education and future. To set records straight, **Howard County is not segregated, and Howard County is diverse. The language and pretext of this resolution is simply false**. In 2017, the Baltimore Sun reported that "Howard County is the most integrated school district in the region. . . . Children of different races — especially those who are black and white — are more likely to sit next to each other in Howard than almost anywhere else in the state." Also, according to the Maryland Equity Project of the University of Maryland, Howard County is the most integrated school district in the region.

Second, **the definition of segregated school used in the resolution is problematic and may have unintended implications and serious consequences**. In County Council's draft resolution, segregated schools are "defined as schools where less than 40% of the student population is white." This definition grossly ignores the fact that Howard County's schools serve a majority-minority student population with only about 37% white students, so it is mathematically impossible to integrate the schools. If a redistricting plan instead caused each school to perfectly represent the community's overall racial composition, then segregation would get even worse. According to the County Council's definition, each school would be then segregated. So, **the County Council's draft resolution effectively calls upon the Board of Education to reimpose 1950's era segregation upon the children of Howard County**. In other words, if the Board of Education commits actual segregation by designating some "Non-Whites Only" schools in each category (elementary, middle, and high school), then it could conceivably ensure every other school in the county meets the County Council's standard of being more than 40% white students. It looks like some council members didn't really think through this serious unlawful implications.

It is evident **the resolution was drafted and released without necessary and proper consulting** with the Board of Education, and - frankly - anybody within the whole communities this resolution purports to represent was disturbing. I am sure high-priced attorneys are consulted so it sounds lawful and PR proof. I ask the council members to respect the BoE's independent jurisdiction and consult broader communities before introducing any such disturbing resolution.

Third, **trying to use the public-school system or redistricting to solve income and race imbalance is the wrong approach** as it does not solve the underlining issues with poverty concentration, nor does it address the fundamental issues in under-performing schools. **Bad county zoning, housing policies and deteriorating family values in certain communities over years are causes to blame**. By forcing numerous working families to take on increased financial and logistical burdens, by robbing citizens of their

freedom to choose where to live and where to go to school, and by separating friendships our kids established in their most formative years, this resolution and corresponding redistricting serves to rip our communities apart and creates animosity and class warfare among our citizens. Please have a different resolution or plan to fix these root problems instead of overstepping our publicly elected school board and reshuffling the students around to re-balance numbers which doesn't solve deeper underlining problems and can be counterproductive.

Fourth, **Increasing FARMS rate and poverty concentration are complex issues and have many causes (school system is not one of them). Overly relying on one single social economical measure like FARMS rate without analyzing it holistically could lead to wrong conclusion and bad policy making.** Nationally FARMS rate has been increasing significantly (See Table 1) over the last decades. Howard county FARMS rate follows that trend but almost doubled during that period (see table 2), still Howard county's FARMS rate of 22% is less than one third of the national average which is at 73.6%. While one may wonder why Columbia is so attractive to low income family, it is evident that Howard county does not become more segregated than it was 10 years ago based on the % change of FARMS rate over 10 years across school types (Elementary, Middle and High schools) and even across all high schools. Also, even the two high schools with over 40% FARMS rate are still lower than national average. So it is questionable to claim Howard county school system is segregated or becomes more social-economically segregated just simply based on FARMS rate changes. If we look at FARMS rate holistically, it may actually tell a very different story.

Last but not the least, **Redistricting, and "student mobility" it creates, will hurt all students and communities, including these at disadvantage.** There are tons of comprehensive researches on student mobility including redistricting which clearly shows it would negatively impact students' performance. Here is just one sample research: " Student Mobility and the Increased Risk of High School Dropout", Russell W. Rumberger and Katherine A. Larson, American Journal of Education, Vol. 107, No. 1 (Nov., 1998), pp. 1-35 (35 pages), Published by: The University of Chicago Press" which clearly underscores that schools can adversely affect "student mobility" when dealing with overcrowding and redistricting. It concludes that students who switched schools even once between eighth and twelfth grade were "twice as likely to not complete high school." For more research evidence, here is the link to a comprehensive research scan on how student mobility often associated with reduced education performance:

[https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/EC%20Mobility%20Research%20Memo%20-%20Meeting%205%20\(June%202016\).pdf](https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/EC%20Mobility%20Research%20Memo%20-%20Meeting%205%20(June%202016).pdf)

I urge you to reject the CR 112- 2019 plan and abandon this misguided endeavor and instead focus on realigning our tax dollars with needs of Howard County's most vulnerable. Please fully fund the HCPSS budget and invest in the families and kids who live in low income communities and give them the opportunities and resources necessary to succeed. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Shane Liu

Clarksville, MD

Appendix:

Research Scan on the Impact of Student Mobility on Student and School Outcomes

[https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/EC%20Mobility%20Research%20Memo%20-%20Meeting%205%20\(June%202016\).pdf](https://dme.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dme/publication/attachments/EC%20Mobility%20Research%20Memo%20-%20Meeting%205%20(June%202016).pdf)

Table 1. National FARMS Rate

Fiscal Year	Free Lunch	Reduced Price	Full Price	Total	Percent Free/RP of Total
	-----Millions-----				%
2007	15.0	3.1	12.6	30.6	59.3
2008	15.4	3.1	12.5	31.0	60.1
2009	16.3	3.2	11.9	31.3	62.6
2010	17.6	3.0	11.1	31.8	65.3
2011	18.4	2.7	10.8	31.8	66.6
2012	18.7	2.7	10.2	31.7	68.2
2013	18.9	2.6	9.2	30.7	70.5
2014	19.2	2.5	8.8	30.5	71.6
2015	19.8	2.2	8.5	30.5	72.6
2016	20.1	2.0	8.2	30.4	73.3
2017	20.0	2.0	8.0	30.0	73.6

Note: Data is from USDA FNS program website.

Table 2: HCPSS FARMS Rate

F/R Rate	School Year											
School Name	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	Grand Total	% Change 2017 vs 2008
ELEMENTARY	13.8%	15.2%	17.4%	18.9%	20.4%	21.1%	21.9%	23.9%	24.4%	25.1%	20.4%	181.7%
MIDDLE	11.6%	12.4%	14.3%	15.8%	17.8%	18.7%	19.6%	20.3%	20.9%	21.8%	17.5%	187.9%
HIGH	10.2%	11.4%	13.6%	14.7%	15.5%	16.3%	17.0%	18.6%	19.5%	20.0%	15.7%	195.7%
ATHOLTON	4.6%	6.0%	6.6%	6.1%	7.2%	7.1%	7.8%	8.5%	8.5%	9.0%	7.1%	194.8%
CENTENNIAL	4.6%	4.6%	6.1%	7.5%	7.1%	7.5%	8.8%	9.5%	10.1%	11.1%	7.7%	239.9%
GLENELG	2.3%	1.6%	1.9%	3.5%	3.5%	3.3%	3.8%	4.4%	3.7%	3.9%	3.2%	170.4%
HAMMOND	17.0%	20.1%	24.0%	25.3%	26.6%	28.1%	31.2%	34.8%	34.3%	35.8%	27.7%	211.3%
HOWARD	5.6%	6.6%	8.9%	10.4%	10.5%	10.8%	10.6%	12.0%	11.8%	13.2%	10.2%	236.6%
LONG REACH	18.4%	19.5%	24.3%	26.4%	27.9%	29.3%	30.1%	32.8%	35.5%	35.6%	28.4%	193.6%
MARRIOTT'S RIDGE	2.9%	3.7%	4.7%	4.6%	5.1%	4.8%	4.4%	5.2%	4.8%	4.8%	4.5%	163.2%
MT HEBRON	7.4%	9.6%	11.4%	12.7%	11.7%	12.1%	12.6%	14.0%	14.8%	15.4%	12.2%	208.3%
OAKLAND MILLS	24.1%	25.9%	28.9%	32.0%	36.1%	38.3%	37.6%	40.3%	44.3%	46.4%	35.2%	192.6%
RESERVOIR	13.0%	15.8%	18.1%	20.1%	21.6%	23.3%	24.2%	24.1%	27.0%	26.9%	21.4%	206.5%
RIVER HILL	4.8%	5.3%	6.0%	5.9%	6.1%	6.4%	7.7%	6.4%	4.6%	1.4%	5.5%	28.8%
WILDE LAKE	20.0%	20.8%	26.2%	27.6%	29.2%	31.1%	32.9%	37.5%	40.3%	40.2%	30.3%	201.6%
HCPSS Total	12.3%	13.5%	15.7%	17.1%	18.4%	19.2%	20.0%	21.6%	22.2%	22.9%	18.4%	185.6%

Note: River Hill FARMS rate for 2016-2017 school year and % Change seems to be an outlier and there are likely data quality issue; This table was compiled from the report: **HCPSS FARMS Percentages by School**

FY08-FY17

County Council,

I'm here to oppose CR-112 and I'm directly addressing you as an individual taxpayer.

President Ronald Reagan once said: "The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help." President Thomas Jefferson said: "A wise and frugal government, ... shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned."

I'd like to speak of three things.

First: Achievement gaps. There is NO achievement gaps, period. Parents, and their children have freedom to choose what areas they want to develop, and the areas that they focus on will show the most improvement. It just so happens that most parents who want to focus on academic development choose to go to certain schools and live close by so they have more time to help their kids to learn and kids can have more time to sleep and study. There is however a so called "Opportunity Gap" that's the direct result of how people choose to focus on - a well academically rounded kid can find a job relatively easily because such jobs are everywhere, while a child who focuses on baseball skill development has much less chance to find one because there's only one Major League. So, is CR-112 telling people that they don't have freedom to choose their future and have to all go the academic route?

Second: Segregation and Socioeconomic imbalance. Segregation is evil because at its root a group of people think that they are superior than others. But in Howard County, I don't believe anyone of the residents think that anyone is more superior than any other. In my neighborhood, I have Asian, Indian, caucasian, African American, and even African neighbors all live peacefully and harmonically together. It's a political stunt to claim socioeconomic imbalance after segregation claim fails. The most effect way to rake in the votes is to tell a group of rather happy people that all their sufferings are caused by others. A society is bound to have income differences. But not all who live close to a "good" school is rich. The reason I can live in my home is because 1. I choose to live close to it so my son can have more sleep and I can volunteer; 2. it is my choice that my son's education is priority #1 in my family, before my nike shoes, my adidas shirts, my iphone, my tv and cable services. BTW, I don't have tv and cable service at home because I choose to spend more time with my son on his homework. And CR-112 is telling me that my son's academic achievement is unacceptable because his dad put his health and academic success as priority #1.

Third: Socialism. I lived in a socialist regime for more than 20 years. I fought it 30 years ago on the streets of China. I compare what you do here on par with what Chinese Communist Party did in China. All socialist countries and their experiments have failed their people in the history. The socialists use the name of "for the greater good" to pit people against people so they can benefit from the fight to advance their own political agenda. And it soon will inevitably lead to corruption, and we start to see the sign of it from the inner circles of elected officials in this whole circus show. CR-112 will ruin the community by averaging out the illusive statistics while creating a county government that wants to control every aspect of people's lives.

President Thomas Jefferson also said: "When government fear the people, there is liberty. When the people fear the government, there is tyranny." And tyranny is what we are witnessing right now that is trying to terrifying all of us by hurting the most vulnerable of all - our children. CR-112 is complete unnecessary at its best; at its worst, a community future destroyer. We must strike it down to send the message: the government is not the boss, we are! And it cannot simply do whatever it wants.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Barbara Zektick, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

The Families for Education Improvement to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CR 112-2019 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: [opposition] Barbara Zektick

Signature: _____

Date: September 18, 2019

Organization: Families for Education Improvement

Organization Address: P.O. Box 203, Glenelg, MD 21737

P.O. Box 203, Glenelg, MD 21737

Number of Members: +/- 600

Name of Chair/President: Vipin Sahijwani

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.