

Sayers, Margery

From: JOHN SMITH <jdsmith51@verizon.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2019 4:48 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Testimony in favor of CR134-2019
Attachments: I support CR 134 redline.docx

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Council Members,

I am attaching my testimony in favor of passing CR 134-2019. I attended the Monday night hearing, but when it became apparent I would have to wait four hours, I gave it to somebody at the table up front. I am sending it to you now in case it never made it to you. Thanks.

JD Smith

Testimony in support of CR134-2019 - October 21, 2019

The idea of **redlining** in real estate refers to the practice of defining specific neighborhoods or areas on a map as more or less desirable to live. Areas defined by a red line, or designated in red, were considered to be less desirable. In 1977 redlining in real estate was found to be **discriminatory**. I believe the advertising of a school zone in promotional materials in order to steer potential home buyers to specific school zones is not only unethical, it could be illegal.

The practice of including school attendance areas when publicly advertising homes for sale improperly discriminates against both seller and buyer. It discriminates against sellers of property in neighborhoods with lower ranked schools by deflating a property's value, and it discriminates against buyers in higher ranked school areas by inflating the cost of housing to them. Furthermore, it is misleading, as redistricting can occur at any time.

Another consequence of this practice is that promoting one school zone over another creates an "us versus them" dynamic and becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy, thereby contributing to divisiveness in a community. Purposely steering higher income families to specific school zones and away from others segregates schools by socioeconomic status and deprives all students the important life skill of interacting with and learning from others whose life experiences may be different from their own.

CR134 applies specifically to directional signs and promotional materials. These materials and signs are public proclamations that create a first impression that Howard County is not the inclusive and welcoming place it is meant to be. First impressions are important. Please pass CR134.

Respectfully submitted,

JD Smith

7425 Swan Point Way,

Columbia, MD 21045

Sayers, Margery

From: Jones, Opel
Sent: Tuesday, October 22, 2019 1:31 PM
To: Sayers, Margery
Cc: Harris, Michael; Bailey, Najee
Subject: FW: Council Resolution 134-2019 and CR 112

Margery,

Please see testimony received in opposition to Council Resolution 134-2019.

Thank you.

From: Peter F. Chew <pfchew@prospera-us.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2019 10:04 AM
To: Jones, Opel <ojones@howardcountymd.gov>
Cc: Yungmann, David <dyungmann@howardcountymd.gov>; Jung, Deb <djung@howardcountymd.gov>; Walsh, Elizabeth <ewalsh@howardcountymd.gov>; Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov>
Subject: Council Resolution 134-2019 and CR 112

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Mr. Jones,

You have gone too far with this hijacking of the redistricting plan and CR112. Now you are trying to overstep your authority and responsibility with this illegal and illegitimate resolution you are introducing to restrict the notification of housing districts for home sales.

What are you afraid of? Please listen to my testimony in the October 14th BOE Hearing on the proposed redistricting plan by the Superintendent. I have attached a copy of my testimony if you care to read.

Mr. Jones, what you know is true and want to somehow illegally change, is that in America, whether we like it or not, housing prices are demand driven by schools and school districts. Parents that understand that education is one of the important keys to success in life seek out the best performing schools and school districts for their families. This is not driven by racism or by a desire to be separated from specific groups of people. Rather, it is purely driven by a desire to be around other families that understand this importance of education and are willing to invest their money, their time and even work commutes. It is driven by desire to ensure their children are surrounded by other children whose parents have the same goals and priorities. These children do homework, sports, music, boy & girl scouts after school, and as with my children, often have their "free play" curtailed to focus on their education.

Yes, most of us have been blessed and have more means than those in your district. But this is not because it was given to us, but because our parents and our own desire for a better life have given us the ambition, the strength and the courage to make the sacrifices for our families.

In 2009, my wife (Chinese American with a PhD in Chemistry) and I moved from Baltimore City to Prince Georges County because we could not afford a home in the Centennial or River Hill school districts that we desired. We had a plan that we would start a family, work hard and save our money so we could move to Howard County in 5 years when the children would be ready for school. In 2011, we made a decision to start our own consulting business...my daughter was 10 months old, 3 days prior, we found out my wife was pregnant with our son....we had less than \$7,000.00 in our

checking and savings account, my wife had quit her job in the Fall of 2009 to focus on starting our family and we were spending more money each month than we were making with my salary.

I often worked 7 days a week, both days and nights. We saved our money. We did not take vacations. Yes, we were blessed as opportunities came with the business and in 2015 we bought our house in the River Hill school district. But almost immediately after we moved in, our business took a severe downturn. Through 2016, we went into debt, not making enough money most months to pay our bills. We considered selling our house, but chose to borrow money to stay because we knew it would be best for our kids. Finally, and slowly, in 2017, we started to turn things around with the business....but it is a constant effort.

I am white, my wife is not. She is also a minority, Asian....I think you forget that there are other minorities than just African Americans / Blacks. We are not privileged and I assure you, no one has given us anything. I had to pay for my own college as my parents had 4 children and struggled to pay their bills most months.

We paid a premium for our house because it is in the River Hill District. I wish I did not have to do that, but this is America. If you want to increase your own home value, have the Council and the Superintendent focus on providing additional resources to schools and students in need that live in the underperforming schools. Do not play politics with our children and try to swap them around to different schools.

As an elected official, stop giving lip service to problems...stop these ridiculous snake oil cures for the issues our children face. Do your job, even when it is difficult...or get another job.

Council Resolution 134-2019 –Introduced by Opel Jones -A RESOLUTION calling on those offering homes for sale in Howard County to omit references to schools and school zones in certain advertising.

Peter Chew
Vice President



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