

Sayers, Margery

From: Skalny, Cindy
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 8:50 AM
To: Sayers, Margery
Subject: FW: Prospective appointment to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees

From: Dennis Kenez <dennis.kenez@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 8:37 AM
To: Yungmann, David <dyungmann@howardcountymd.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Prospective appointment to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Councilman Yungmann,

I have attached a message sent yesterday to the Howard County Library System, urging them to put forth a different candidate to fill the open appointment slot. If, however, they choose to stand firm with their nomination of Sabina Taj, then I urge you to vote no to her appointment for the same reasons as noted.

Respectfully,
 Dennis Kenez
 6120 Eternal Ocean Place
 Clarksville, MD 21029

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Dennis Kenez <dennis.kenez@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 16, 2021 at 1:14 PM
Subject: Prospective appointment to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees
To: <hclsboard@hclibrary.org>

Dear Howard County Library Board of Trustees,

The Howard County Library System (HCLS) vision is that of a vital component of the county's renowned education system, delivering excellence in education for everyone, advancing the economy and quality of life. Indeed, HCLS is recognized as a national leader among the great public libraries. Rightly so, many residents consider HCLS to be one of the brightest jewels in Howard County's crown. As a Howard County resident since 1998, I heartily concur.

I am writing to express my concern over the appointment of former Board of Education member Sabina Taj to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees. Ms. Taj may have an impressive professional paper record to support this nomination, but looking beyond the paper record, her involvement in county affairs as both a public official and as a private citizen has been rife with controversy and concerning displays of unethical leadership and poor judgment.

If the goal of the HCLS Board of Trustees is to preserve and enhance this valuable county asset, then I urge you to put forth a different candidate who possesses the requisite skills and temperament

demanded by this appointment. Surely, the current board can nominate someone who satisfies these requirements without compromising past failures of judgment to follow established policy and rules of governance.

Thank you for your consideration of this request,
Dennis Kenez
HCLS card #2-1267-0112-7517-0

Sayers, Margery

From: Baker, Kevin
Sent: Monday, August 16, 2021 1:40 PM
To: Sayers, Margery
Subject: FW: Support for Sabina Taj's appointment to Howard Country Library System Board

For CR118 public record.

From: Kyle Reis <zazoomzimminy@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 15, 2021 10:07 PM
To: Walsh, Elizabeth <ewalsh@howardcountymd.gov>
Subject: Support for Sabina Taj's appointment to Howard Country Library System Board

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

To:
Liz Walsh
Re:
Support for Sabina Taj's appointment to Howard County Library System Board

Dear Ms. Walsh,

I've always loved how Howard County prides itself on the quality of its civic discourse. You see it in the "choose civility" bumper stickers on local cars and the many "Hate Has No Home" signs proudly displayed on front lawns throughout the county. Unfortunately, this pride of civility in recent years has been put to the test by a number of divisive voices intent on tearing down people and institutions no matter the cost. Social media outlets like Facebook embolden people to say things online that they would never dare to say to a person's face, particularly if they knew them or knew how their characterizations fly in the face of the reality of that person.

Sabina Taj is one such person. If one were to come up with a list of qualities you'd want to see in a Howard County Library board member, they'd likely include someone with a long history of civic engagement in the community. A person with a keen intelligence thoughtfully applied. They'd likely look for a kind person, someone who would give the shirt off her back to help a person in need. They'd want someone philanthropically minded with a strong record of charitable giving combined with solid networks in the foundation community. And if this person were also a woman of of color with a perspective on the world well aligned with thousands of people in the community, that would be so much the better. Sabina Taj checks every single box.

Ms. Taj is not only someone I recommend you approve to the Howard County Library Board of Trustees, but that you vote for with both hands held high. Her experience in education,

philanthropy, civic engagement, academia, and so much more make her an ideal candidate for library board service. Her commitment to equity in her brief time on the Board of the Howard County Public School System changed the conversation so that it more intentionally included the voices of those often left out when decisions are being made about their children's education. Ms. Taj has worked at the Community Foundation of Howard County, she's taught at Howard Community College, she's a Leadership Howard County graduate. She's been a champion for the underdog even as those who would silence her regularly attack, this despite her no longer being a public official. Do not allow these individuals to silence voices like Sabina's or you will silence the future voices of those, like her, who seek to advocate for those underrepresented in society.

For these and so many more reasons, I strongly encourage the county council to approve Ms. Taj's appointment to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees on September 8th. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kyle Reis

Sayers, Margery

From: Haydee Herrera <lolalagrande123@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 6:51 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Fwd: Council - Nomination of Sabina Taj for Board of Trustees HCLS

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Council Members,

I want to express my support for Sabina Taj to become a member of the Board of Trustees of HCLS. She is an extraordinary member of our community, someone who has tirelessly worked to improve the lives of everyone in the county, particularly children. On top of that, her educational background makes her very well equipped to make sure the mission of the Library System continues to be as excellent as it is today.

Best wishes,
Haydee Herrera

Sayers, Margery

From: no-reply@howardcountymd.gov
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 6:43 PM
To: lolalagrande123@gmail.com
Subject: Council - Nomination of Sabina Taj for Board of Trustees HCLS

First Name: Haydee

Last Name: Herrera

Email: lolalagrande123@gmail.com

Street Address: 4039 Hunt Ave

City: Ellicott City

Subject: Nomination of Sabina Taj for Board of Trustees HCLS

Message: Dear Council Members, I want to express my support for Sabina Taj to become a member of the Board of Trustees of HCLS. She is an extraordinary member of our community, someone who has tirelessly worked to improve the lives of everyone in the county, particularly children. On top of that, her educational background makes her very well equipped to make sure the mission of the Library System continues to be as excellent as it is today. Best wishes, Haydee Herrera

Sayers, Margery

From: no-reply@howardcountymd.gov
Sent: Tuesday, August 3, 2021 2:32 PM
To: ddboulton@verizon.net
Subject: Council - CR 117 & 118

First Name: Dick
Last Name: Boulton
Email: ddboulton@verizon.net
Street Address: 4669 Hallowed Stream
City: Ellicott City
Subject: CR 117 & 118

Message:

I'm writing to recommend that Sabina Taj not be considered for a position as Howard County Library Trustee. Ms. Taj is widely known to be a highly divisive individual with serious conflict of interest issues. Discussions have been underway to tear down the recently renovated Central Library and, for unclear reasons, build a new library within the Howard Hughes Corporation's Merriweather District. This move would certainly be a boon to Hughes, but the benefit to Howard County residents remains undefined. Ms. Taj's multiple obligations to Hughes would not be to the library system's advantage in any Hughes/Library negotiations. Most recently, Ms. Taj served as a key player in the Hughes "Rouse Project," an unsuccessful dark-money scheme to take over the Columbia Association Board of Directors. She served in this role as a primary spokesperson in league with Ken Ulman, a reported Hughes consultant. Ms. Taj also worked closely with Philip Dodge, Executive Director of the Downtown Columbia Partnership, whose position was created and largely funded by Hughes. Mr. Dodge was the chief "Rouse Project" recruiter and organizer. He is also a current Library Board trustee. Not long ago, the president of the Howard Hughes Corporation made a slide presentation to real estate investors. A slide in that presentation is headed "HCC: The Opportunity to Control Cities" and reads: "Ownership and monopoly-like control of small cities allow HHC to both create demand and control supply of commercial entities - creating outsized risk-adjusted development opportunities for decades." Ms. Taj is an example of how HCC insinuates influence over communities by implanting operatives throughout local institutions. Ms. Taj appears to be on a joint ticket with Ainy Haider-Shah who is being considered for a position on the Library's Compensation Review Commission. I don't personally know Ainy Haider-Shah, but she apparently claims to know me. After I won a close election for Dorsey's Search's representative to the CA Board, Ms. Haider-Shah tweeted: "The local liars and assholes started the white supremacy machine but the 'nice white people' and the nice white-adjacent 'model minorities' FUELED IT. Unable to look inside at their own shitty biases, they instead listened to the whispers of the white supremacy machine." I really don't believe that this is an individual with the temperament or character to work for what is widely recognized to be one of the top library systems in the nation. Sincerely, Dick Boulton 4669 Hallowed Stream Ellicott City, MD 21042

Sayers, Margery

From: Miriam Bell <mtcbell@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 4:19 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CR-117 & CR-118

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Good afternoon,

I am writing to voice my support for the appointment of Sabina Taj to the Library Board of Trustees and for the inclusion of Ainy Haider-Shah on the Compensation Review Commission. Both women have demonstrated time and again their commitment to our community and their willingness to be active participants. I have had the pleasure of meeting both Ms. Taj and Ms. Haider-Shah on multiple occasions, and have no doubt that they would provide excellent service in the positions under consideration.

I would please encourage you to vote "yes" on both CR-117 and CR-118.

Thank you for your time,
Miriam Bell
Howard County Council District 2
Oakland Mills, Columbia

Sayers, Margery

From: Lisa Marini <lisavmarini@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 1:35 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Support CR-117 and CR-118

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Councilmembers,

I fully support the appointment of Sabina Taj to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees and Ainy Haider-Shah to the Compensation Review Commission. These two people have already demonstrated their commitment to Howard County through their many years of involvement in community organizations. Their individual professional experiences will be assets to the boards/commissions to which they have been nominated.

Best regards,
Lisa Marini
District 4

Sayers, Margery

From: Amy R Brooks <amyreeneebrooks@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 2, 2021 12:49 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Appointments

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Greetings,

Sabina Taj and Ainy Haider-Shah are two strong, dedicated community leaders who have been appointed to serve on the Library Board of Trustees and the Compensation Review Commission.

I'm so excited for their tenure and representation in these roles.

I support for CR-117 and CR-118.

Amy Brooks

Sayers, Margery

From: Royalty, Wendy
Sent: Sunday, August 1, 2021 7:17 PM
To: Sayers, Margery
Subject: Fwd: Vote NO to Sabina Taj & Ainy Haider-Shah Appointments

For the record

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From: Jake Burdett <jakeburdett11@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 26, 2021 8:41 AM
To: Royalty, Wendy
Subject: Vote NO to Sabina Taj & Ainy Haider-Shah Appointments

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Wendy,

I'm writing to you as a staffer of Liz Walsh's to express my wishes to see my Councilmember vote AGAINST the appointments of Sabina Taj and Ainy Haider-Shah to any County Commission or Board. I had the displeasure of working with both of these women on a Board of Education campaign, and found both of them to be extremely unethical and unscrupulous actors, who I would never trust with any position of real authority or responsibility. These people regularly bully and smear honest and hardworking community activists, and spread propaganda on behalf of their elected officials they've pledged loyalty to, including by propping up the developer donors and PR that keeps their people in office.

That, in addition to Sabina Taj's proximity to the development lobby (specifically Howard Hughes Corporation) through her recent position as a Board Member of the dark money group The Rouse Project that tried to take over the CA Board, should be enough grounds to reject these nominations. It is speculated that Howard Hughes would like to build housing at the Central Library location in Howard County, so having Sabina Taj sit on this Board/Commission would be a pretty obvious conflict of interest. Also, knowing the character of both of these women pretty well, I'm 100% sure they will both use these positions to further their own self interests, rather than the interests of the community.

Sincerely,
Jake Burdett, a D1 Constituent

5824 Timberview Drive
Elkridge, MD 21075

Sayers, Margery

From: Vanessa Rembert <vanessarembert@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 31, 2021 11:37 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Opposition to council resolution 117-2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my concern over the prospective appointment of former Board of Education member Sabina Taj to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees and to ask you to vote no to Council Resolution 117-2021 ("A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Sabina Taj to the Board of Library Trustees."). Ms. Taj may have an impressive professional paper record to support this appointment but looking beyond this, her involvement in county affairs as both a public official and as a private citizen has been rife with controversy and concerning displays of unethical leadership and poor judgment.

Here are just a few examples that I can readily provide links to for more information:

1) Firsthand account of divisive leadership by Ms. Taj posted by a person who served with her on a PTA prior to her time as a BOE member: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2544052569152118/>

unpaid volunteer positions. This organization was "outed" by one of the CA election candidates (Richa Bolton) as being a front company for developers (e.g. The Howard Hughes Corporation) interested in influencing the CA elections and placing CA Director who would facilitate future land use deals & development projects:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2996809760543061>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2993993794157991>

Ms. Taj also was involved in the PR wing of "The Rouse Project", which produced a very divisive mailer that denigrated former County Executive Liz Bobo and labeled all critics of "The Rouse Project" as "haters" going so far as to produce a "hate list" for the organization: <https://scotteblog.com/2021/03/23/em-from-the-rouse-project-outlines-their-haters-and-responses-to-the-email-from-those-mentioned-in-howard-county/>

This is just a small sampling of what Ms. Tai has bro

community as a whole.

By the evidence above, as well as the many other examples that can be shared by other Howard County residents and public official colleagues who have recently worked with her, it is clear that appointing N. Taj to this position will bring significant risk of both future controversies & unneeded drama to HCLS and its leadership as well as obvious risks of conflict of interest when budget decisions related to library land use and development are decided (e.g. budget & policy decisions regarding the fate of the Central Library and The Howard Hughes Corporation's desire to relocate and build what they deem as affordable housing in its place).

I urge you to vote no to Council Resolution 117-2021 and to discuss with your Council colleagues to reach a majority decision of "no" on this matter. The Howard County Library System is too precious to entrust to an individual with such an obvious list of recent ethics transgressions, controversies, and probable conflicts of interest. Please entrust this responsibility to another Howard County citizen who will bring respectful, steady leadership to this important position.

Vanessa Rembert

--

Thanks,
Vanessa Rembert

Sayers, Margery

From: Nalini Nina Harry <narry127@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 4:30 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Do not appoint Sabina Taj to anything ever in Howard county!!

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

I am starting to wonder if anyone actually listens to the voices of Howard county residents or if this email will get lost with the rest of the concerned citizens emails...

If I had known how corrupt Howard county really was I would have never purchased a million-dollar home in this county. It's too late for me to leave the county now but I am truly disappointed in how voices of concerned citizens are never heard. And if they are heard, no one ever does anything about their concerns.

Here goes another email that may just be a waste....but here's to hoping *someone* in the county wants to do the right thing.

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my concern over the prospective appointment of former Board of Education member Sabina Taj to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees. Ms. Taj may have an impressive professional paper record to support this appointment, but looking beyond the paper record, her involvement in county affairs as both a public official and as a private citizen has been rife with controversy and concerning displays of unethical leadership and poor judgment.

Here are just a few examples that I can readily provide links to for more information:

1) Firsthand account of divisive leadership by Ms. Taj posted by a person who served with her on a PTA prior to her time as a BOE member: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2544052569152118/>

2) In November 2019, Ms. Taj led the HCPSS BOE to violate the Open Meetings Act:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2676503365907037/>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2481593048731404/permalink/2587065884850786/>

3) Ms. Taj was a founding member of "The Rouse Project" --- an organization that brought significant dark money & unprecedented advertising into the 2021 Columbia Association Board of Directors elections --- unpaid volunteer positions. This organization was "outed" by one of the CA election candidates (Richard Bolton) as being a front company for developers (e.g. The Howard Hughes Corporation) interested in influencing the CA elections and placing CA Directors who would facilitate future land use deals & development projects:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2996809760543061>
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HoCoNU/posts/2993993794157991>

Ms. Taj also was involved in the PR wing of "The Rouse Project", which produced a very divisive mailer that denigrated former County Executive Liz Bobo and labeled all critics of "The Rouse Project" as "haters" --- going so far as to produce a "hate list" for the organization: <https://scotteblog.com/.../email-from-the-rouse-project.../>

This is just a small sampling of what Ms. Taj has brought to Howard County politics: controversies, division, violations, unethical political maneuvering, and probable conflicts-of-interest with her strong ties to special interest groups through The Rouse Project. As well-intentioned as her public service and civic engagement may be, these are the consistently concerning and unfortunate results when she is granted a position of power and influence.

There are countless other Howard County residents who are able & willing to serve as a member of the HCLS Board of Directors, many of whom could do at least as competent of a job, if not more so, than Ms. Taj, and do so with minimal controversy and consistent respect for their fellow Directors and the community as a whole.

By the evidence above, as well as the many other examples that can be shared by other Howard County residents and public official colleagues who have recently worked with her, it is clear that appointing Ms. Taj to this position will bring significant risk of both future controversies & unneeded drama to HCLS and its leadership as well as obvious risks of conflict of interest when budget decisions related to library land use and development are decided (e.g. budget & policy decisions regarding the fate of the Central Library and The Howard Hughes Corporation's desire to relocate it and build what they deem as affordable housing in its place).

I urge you to vote no to Council Resolution 117-2021 ("A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Sabina Taj to the Board of Library Trustees.") and to discuss with your Council colleagues to reach a majority decision of "no" on this matter.

The Howard County Library System is too precious to entrust to an individual with such an obvious list of recent ethics transgressions, controversies, and probable conflicts of interest. Please entrust this responsibility to another Howard County citizen who will bring respectful, steady leadership to this important position.

Thank you for your consideration of this request,

Nalini Harry
1040 Fairlane Rd, Woodbine, MD 21797

Sayers, Margery

From: Lindsay Lukas <dakota1956@comcast.net>
Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 12:09 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Support for CR-117 and CR-118

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

I support Sabina Taj and Ainy Haider-Shah for their pending appointments.

Lindsay Lukas
Wilde Lake, Columbia

Sayers, Margery

From: Kirstin Nelson <kirstin99@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 12:09 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Support for CR-117 and CR-118

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

As a resident of Howard County, I sickened at the smear campaign launched against Sabina Taj and Ainy Haider-Shah. Sicked but not surprised in any way. The racist vitriol coming from so many Howard County residents must be addressed by standing up against them.

Please vote in favor of CR-117 and CR-118.

Regards,
Kirstin Nelson
410-409-0651

Sayers, Margery

From: Parncutt, Stephanie <Stephanie.Parncutt@fda.hhs.gov>
Sent: Friday, July 30, 2021 9:44 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Opposition to Council Resolution 117-2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my concern over the prospective appointment of former Board of Education member Sabina Taj to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees and to ask you to vote no to Council Resolution 117-2021 ("A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Sabina Taj to the Board of Library Trustees."). Ms. Taj may have an impressive professional paper record to support this appointment, but looking beyond this, her involvement in county affairs as both a public official and as a private citizen has been rife with controversy and concerning displays of unethical leadership and poor judgment.

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<https://www.facebook.com/.../permalink/2587065884850786/>

3) Ms. Taj was a founding member of "The Rouse Project" --- an organization that brought significant dark money & unprecedented advertising into the 2021 Columbia Association Board of Directors elections --- unpaid volunteer positions. This organization was "outed" by one of the CA election candidates (Richard Bolton) as being a front company for developers (e.g. The Howard Hughes Corporation) interested in influencing the CA elections and placing CA Directors who would facilitate future land use deals & development projects:
<https://www.facebook.com/.../HoCoNU/posts/2996809760543061>
<https://www.facebook.com/.../HoCoNU/posts/2993993794157991>

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This is just a small sampling of what Ms. Taj has brought to Howard County politics: controversies, division, violations, unethical political maneuvering, and probable conflicts-of-interest with her strong ties to special interest groups through The Rouse Project. As well-intentioned as her public service and civic engagement may be, these are the consistently concerning and unfortunate results when she is granted a position of power and influence. There are countless other Howard County residents who are able & willing to serve as a member of the HCLS Board of Directors, many of whom could do at least as competent of a job, if not more so, than Ms. Taj, and do so with minimal controversy and consistent respect for their fellow Directors and the community as a whole.

By the evidence above, as well as the many other examples that can be shared by other Howard County residents and public official colleagues who have recently worked with her, it is clear that appointing Ms. Taj to this position will bring significant risk of both future controversies & unneeded drama to HCLS and its leadership as well as obvious risks of

