

CR117-2021

Sayers, Margery

From: Jnstuck13 <jnstuck13@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 8:02 AM
To: Hclsboard; CouncilMail
Subject: Letter of support for Sabina Taj

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

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing in support of Sabina Taj's nomination for a position on the board of the Howard County Library system. I can't think of a better person to be nominated. I've known Sabina for over a decade and she has continually dedicated her time and talents to education in our county. Sabina is a wonderful mother and puts that same passion into education for all of our children and community members. Her years of experience would be an asset to our much loved library system and provide another diverse perspective in serving our county.

Thanks for your time,

Jennifer Stuck

Mad River Bakes
<https://m.facebook.com/madriverbakes/>

Sayers, Margery

From: Vanessa Reis <vanessareis128@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 10:41 PM
To: Walsh, Elizabeth; Jones, Opel; Rigby, Christiana; Jung, Deb; Yungmann, David; CouncilMail
Subject: Vote YES on 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.]

September 7, 2021

I am writing to share my support for Sabina Taj to the HCLS Board of Trustees. I had sent a letter previously but it was not included in the other written testimonies so I wanted to write once more to reiterate my support for Ms. Taj.

Ms. Taj's experience in education, leadership, and commitment to serving the people of Howard County has been demonstrated through her extensive work in various educational settings. Her commitment to equity helped the Howard County Public School System actualize their policy for educational equity, and codify policies and practices to ensure every student is given the opportunity to attain their goals towards their future.

In addition, Ms. Taj's work at the Howard County Community College, and passion for strengthening community bonds will further support the HCLS mission to deliver high-quality education for all. Her experience in working with different community groups, individuals, and students will be valuable to the HCLS third pillar, Instructive & Enlightening Experiences, to enhance and further the library's initiatives.

Having known her personally for many years, I know firsthand that Sabina Taj is an incredibly ethical, moral person who consistently advocates for the most vulnerable in the community and prioritizes inclusivity. She is a leader who asks critical questions while making sure everyone feels welcome. Amid rising toxicity of the political climate, which has seeped down to the local levels, this ugly whisper campaign in response to her inclusive and thoughtful leadership is clear to me a baseless and farcical character assassination rooted in misogyny and Islamophobia, and by no means a measure of her character. I continue to be disturbed by twisted smear campaigns such as this that strive to silence critical dialogues and silence community leaders, particularly women of color.

On an individual level as I am a recent college graduate, Sabina has been an inspiring mentor to me and other young people, and has taught me what it means to be a true community member and community leader; and to ask crucial questions that others may be afraid to ask, while remaining empathetic, compromising, and understanding towards all.

For all of the stated reasons, I encourage the county council to approve Ms. Taj's appointment to the HCLS Board of Trustees.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Reis
Howard County Resident



September 7, 2021

Dear Councilmembers Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung & Yungmann,

While fundamentalist Muslims celebrate the fall of Kabul and the Taliban victory over the United States of America, Howard County misses the ball with a theatrical play about "Islamophobia" on **9/11/2021**, the 20th anniversary of the day America was attacked.

Poor guidance from extremist advisors, or poor judgment? Either way, it is extremely insensitive. <https://www.facebook.com/HoCoGovExec/photos/a.864703293590453/4412852152108865>

Ball's support of Muslim propaganda is un-American. Kids who lost their parents on this day 20 years ago are young adults now. Americans who lost their son, daughter, grandchild, husband, wife, friend, neighbor, co-worker on 9/11 and its aftermath... have lived in pain for 20 years. This represents a celebration of evil and its terrorist ways, while the actual victims of 9/11 are dismissed, their pain and suffering, minimized and ignored.

This is the same administration that nominated **Hinduphobic SABINA TAJ** (a divisive individual with questionable ties to developers and a poor record during her tenure at the Board of Education), for the Board of Trustees of the Howard County Library System (HCLS).

Indian-Americans are shocked by the open suppression of minorities. Sikhs, Hindus, and other minorities also bore the brunt of the backlash of 9/11, yet they are summarily dismissed. Earlier this year, Sikhs were massacred, gunned down in an apparent hate crime, but not a word from the County Executive or his administration. However, they seem to think it is important to weigh in with anti-Jewish, anti-Hindu/anti-India propaganda.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/young-sikhs-still-struggle-with-post-sept-11-discrimination/ar-AAObPWWh>

The Howard County Government and the HoCo Office of Human Rights & Equity have snubbed the **LARGEST IMMIGRANT MINORITY in Howard County**. They have refused to acknowledge receipt of our complaints about the discrimination faced by Hindus of Howard County, time and time again. We deserve and demand better from the County administration. We urge the County Government to open an investigation about this matter and to clearly **denounce Hinduphobia**, without fear of reprisal from radical extremists.

10020 Baltimore National Pike #6997, Ellicott City, MD 21042

contact@icahoward.org - Ph. (410) 567-6599 - www.icahoward.org

Attn: Councilmembers Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung & Yungmann

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HoCo should solemnly grieve the loss of innocent American lives on this day of mourning. No other diversion is acceptable. The oppressors play victimhood, promote propaganda to advance a false narrative, while these very extremists target other minorities, claim phobia as they slaughter non-believers - Hindus, Jews, Christians... alike. The proper Muslim community response should be a solemn prayer for peace and unity & a **denunciation of radical Islam**, instead of propaganda to shift the blame away from radical fundamentalists.

This is on the heels of a national conference organized by these same extremists to malign Hindus and India, on this day, the **20th anniversary of the worst attack on America!** Dare I remind them that it wasn't the Hindus who attacked USA and killed nearly 3,000 innocent Americans and injured more than 6,000 unsuspecting Americans? **Four of these victims were from Howard County.** About 9000 families were destroyed on 9/11, including more than 400 first responders - not by Hindus, or Jews, or Sikhs, or Christians, but by radical Islamic fundamentalists.

https://theprint.in/opinion/hinduphobia-is-a-reality-scholars-at-dismantling-global-hindutva-conference-must-knowhinduphobia-is-a-reality-scholars-at-dismantling-global-hindutva-conference-must-know/728983/?fbclid=IwAR0MJ3MyVnw4_VOc9a9bkEq8XwXOthpuyITdK2n7XJM0o69Yoeuifmc2Ffs

CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations) is known to have ties to terror groups (according to the State Department). The FBI has broken all ties with this group. How is it that Howard County is putting CAIR representatives on Committees, Boards, Workgroups, County leadership posts, and sponsoring their events? <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/fbi-cuts-ties-with-cair-following-terror-financing-trial>

Calvin Ball is divisive and divides us. His nominee #SabinaTaj divides us. Thousands oppose Taj's nomination and are pained by it. We fear for our safety and that of our children. We demand better from our leaders.

Councilmembers Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung & Yungmann, the County is sliding toward extremism. Sabina Taj's appointment is divisive. We urge you to **SHOW COURAGE**. Fear of retribution should not affect your vote. This is America! Vote for equity, inclusion, and diversity. We seek your help in stamping out and dismantling hate (Kindly refer to my email of July 26th.) We urge you to demand a solemn day of mourning on 9/11 and encourage unity as opposed to hateful propaganda.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sanjay Srivastava

Sanjay Srivastava, President

Indian Cultural Association

<https://www.facebook.com/icaHoward>

cc. President, Howard County Library System, Ms. Tonya Aikens
Howard County Library System, Board of Trustees
Howard County Office of Human Rights & Equity
Howard County Executive, Dr. Calvin Ball

10020 Baltimore National Pike #6997, Ellicott City, MD 21042
contact@icahoward.org - Ph. (410) 567-6599 - www.icaHoward.org

Sayers, Margery

From: rasiddiqi@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, September 6, 2021 10:07 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Rizwan Siddiqi
Subject: Support for 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 County Council Members,

My name is Rizwan Siddiqi and resident of 5410 Josie Court, Ellicott City, Maryland. I urge you to vote YES on Council Resolution 117-2021 appointing Sabina Taj to the Howard County Library System Board of Trustees. Ms Taj's experience in education, her strong leadership skills, and her commitment to Howard County all make her an outstanding choice.

She showed great commitment to all students while on the Board of Education. She has served in a variety of other roles, including as an executive director of an educational foundation, an adjunct professor at Howard County Community College, as a program officer at the Columbia Foundation, and currently serves as a board member on a number of local boards including the Howard County Arts Council. Ms. Taj is a graduate of the prestigious Leadership Howard County and has a passion for strengthening the community that will help HCLS advance its mission to deliver high-quality education for all. She will be an excellent addition to the Howard County Library Board of Trustees.

Additionally, it is noted that Ms. Taj has full support and recommendation of the board of directors of the United Maryland Muslim Council (UMMC) and the Howard County Muslim Council (HCMC) for appointment to this position. For all of the stated reasons, please approve Ms. Taj's appointment by voting YES on Council Resolution 117-2021.

Sincerely,

Rizwan Siddiqi
Chair, UMMC
Director, HCMC
5410 Josie Court
Ellicott City, MD 21043



Members of the County Council,

We are writing to express our opposition to the appointment of Ms. Sabina Taj to the Board of Library Trustees. This appointment would pose a conflict of interest because Ms. Taj is affiliated with the Howard Hughes Corporation (HHC), which has an interest in Central Library property. Ms. Taj cannot represent both the public interest and the corporate interests with which she is affiliated.

Historically, personnel appointments to county boards and commissions garner very little attention from the public. Most appointments warrant little scrutiny as they allow volunteers to serve their community. There are a few, however, that require attention from the public because of their potentially adverse impacts on the county's budget and because they are against the public interest. This appointment is one such example.

The affiliations Ms. Taj has with HHC are public information. Since her election to the Board of Education, Ms. Taj has openly collaborated with developers to advance their interests (e.g. her collaboration with Howard Hughes-affiliated group Center Maryland and the Maryland Building Industry Association throughout the 2019 redistricting process). More recently, she was the founding member of The Rouse Project, a dark-money group, established for the express purpose of controlling the Columbia Association Board.

It was funded by Howard Hughes Corporation, and received widespread criticism from the community, including from former County Executive Liz Bobo, for lack of transparency and for seeking to use the CA Board to further the interests of HHC.

The fact that HHC seeks control of the property where the Central Library is located is also in the public record. In the Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement between Howard Hughes Corporation and Howard County signed in 2016, the "Central Library" appears over 100 times. One of the provisions of the DRRA is for the County to give HHC the valuable location of the "existing central library" in exchange for some other land for a "new central library."

Subsequently a set of complicated financing schemes will take place that would allow, among other things, HHC to use county dollars to fund a parking garage and comeingle other privately beneficial ventures with public needs.

Not a single venture undertaken by HHC has accrued in any meaningful way to the public benefit. Instead, in exchange for hundreds of units in density bonus and tens of millions of dollars in tax increment financing, HHC has built 24 "affordable units" among the thousands of units that are currently online.

We do not believe that a former member of The Rouse Project and an individual with clear and open ties with Howard Hughes Corporation should hold a position that will influence and direct public funds to private gain. The interests of the public and those of HHC are in conflict, and an appointee to represent the public interest cannot have affiliations with HHC.

Please vote no on this appointment.