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9th Legislative District
Howard and Carroll Counties

Finance Committee
Executive Nominations Committee
Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review
Joint Committee on
Base Realignment and Closure
Workers' Compensation Benefit
and Insurance Oversight Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Editor
Howard County Times

Dear Editor,

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) has recently received approval from the Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) to use \$2 million from the recently enacted alcohol tax for turf fields at two area high schools. At the BPW hearing earlier this month, Comptroller Franchot questioned whether turf fields are the most pressing school construction need in Howard County. While I understand the desire for the fields, I must agree with the Comptroller that I do not see how turf fields are more important than fixing roofs and improving classrooms.

The decision to go forward with turf fields at two of the twelve high schools also brings to question the School System's equity policy. Previously, when there was an effort to install football field lights, the School System rejected the proposal until there was funding to install lights in all high schools. Recently, the Mt. Hebron community requested a turf field when their renovation was approved. They were advised that they could not get the field because of the equity policy.

And lastly, it has been verified to me personally that pressure was exerted by the County Executive and a member of the Howard County state delegation on the HCPSS and certain members of the Board of Education. I have been advised that the HCPSS was told that they could only spend the funds from the alcohol tax for schools located in districts where the legislator voted in favor of the tax. This is politics at its worst! The HCPSS and the Board of Education should have emphatically stated that they will not be bullied into spending funds to please politicians at the expense of what is right for Howard County students and families.

On Thursday, October 20th, the Board of Education will be discussing this issue at their evening session. They are not holding a public hearing, therefore, this will be the only opportunity for citizens to express their opinions to the Board by attending the meeting. I hope to see many of you there.

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