



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

MAR 8 2017

Chairman
Derrick Leon Davis
Council Member, District 6

The Hon. Jim Rosapepe, Chair
Prince George's County Senate Delegation
James Senate Office Building, Room 314
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

The Hon. Jay Walker, Chair
Prince George's County House Delegation
Lowe House Office Building, Room 207E
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Re: **Prince George's County Delegation Bill Position**

Dear Senator Rosapepe & Delegate Walker:

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Prince George's County Council, to transmit our position on pending proposed State legislation for the 2017 General Assembly Session. The Council met on March 7, 2017. The enclosed report reflects our position on General Assembly bills as they are currently drafted.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to work together with you and your colleagues to address issues important to our citizens and the operation of Prince George's County. Should you have any questions or need additional information please do not hesitate to contact me. For your convenience my office phone number is (301) 952-3426. Thanks again, for favorable consideration of the Council's position.

Sincerely,

Derrick L. Davis
Chair

Enclosures

cc: Hon. Rushern L. Baker, III, Prince George's County Executive

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RULES & GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Rules & General Assembly met as Committee of the Whole on February 28, 2017 with the following Members present:

Council Member, Derrick L. Davis, Chair
Council Member, Dannielle M. Glaros, Vice Chair
Council Member Mel Franklin
Council Member Andrea C. Harrison
Council Member Obie Patterson
Council Member Deni Taveras
Council Member Karen R. Toles
Council Member Todd M. Turner

The Council voted for the following positions on these respective bills:

HB 41	Real Property – Common Ownership Communities – Statewide Registration – SUPPORT
SB 406	Election Law – Voting System – Optical Scanners in Prince George’s County – SUPPORT
SB 994	School Overcrowding Reduction Act of 2017 – SUPPORT
HB 1080	Education – Universal Prekindergarten – Established – SUPPORT
HB 425/SB 651	Public Schools – Suspensions and Expulsions – SUPPORT
SB 244	Task Force to Study Suspension Rates of African American Prekindergarten Students – SUPPORT



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

(HB 41-2017)
Delegate
Marvin Holmes

Real Property - Common Ownership Communities -
Statewide Registration

POSITION:

SUPPORT

HB 41-2017 – Real Property - Common Ownership Communities - Statewide Registration establishes a Common Ownership Community (COC) Registry within the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT) and requires the governing body of specified cooperative housing corporations, condominiums, and homeowners associations to register with SDAT by January 1 each year.

Registration of COCs is not required statewide and the exact number of COCs in Maryland is unknown. This bill is intended to provide an accurate accounting of Common Ownership Communities throughout the state. Currently, only Montgomery and Prince George's counties require COC registration. This bill does not apply to a COC that is located in a county that maintains a registry and regularly shares information from the county registry with SDAT. Because of this registry, we know that approximately 700 COCs are registered annually. As local representatives it is helpful to monitor the exact number of constituents governed by Common Ownership Communities, and impacted by our public policy decisions related to them.

Therefore, the County Council **SUPPORTS** HB 41 and respectfully requests your favorable consideration of our position.

Prepared by: Maurice Simpson, Jr.
On behalf of Prince George's County Council



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

(SB 406)
Senator Peters

Election Law – Voting Systems – Optical Scanners in
Prince George's County

POSITION:

SUPPORT

SB 406 Election Law – Voting Systems – Optical Scanners in Prince George's County requires that the voting system acquired by the State Board of Elections (SBE) for voting in polling places include at least two optical scanners for each polling place in Prince George's County. The supplemental equipment in Prince George's County must be included in SBE regulations specifying required supplies and equipment for the voting system.

This Council understands that underfunded election areas can result in long lines at polling places, requiring some voters to either wait hours to cast a ballot or to forgo their right to vote in that election. Voters who cannot wait the required amount of time are therefore effectively disenfranchised, while voters in well-funded areas with sufficient voting resources may face minimal or no waiting time. SB 406 seeks to address this concern through additional equipment aimed to help alleviate wait times. During the 2016 general election, the County had two scanners at nearly half of our polling locations. The Council realizes that more equipment is needed in order to better accommodate the needs of our citizens. Adding an additional scanner at the locations that are currently utilizing one scanner is expected to reduce waiting periods County-wide, which could lead to increased voter participation.

The bill imposes a fiscal mandate of approximately \$120,000 annually on Prince George's County, which we look forward to discussing with our Delegation to ensure the needs of our citizens are met and maintained.

SB 406 is designed to improve the flow of voters by reducing wait times during our elections, and therefore the County Council offers its **SUPPORT**. We respectfully request your favorable consideration of our position.

Prepared by: Maurice Simpson, Jr.
Jennifer A. Jenkins
On behalf of Prince George's County Council



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

(SB 994)
Senator Jim
Rosapepe

School Overcrowding Reduction Act of 2017

POSITION:

SUPPORT

SB994 - School Overcrowding Reduction Act of 2017 renames the Maryland Stadium Authority to the "Maryland Construction Authority" and authorizes local governmental units to request assistance from the Authority regarding public school facility construction projects. The bill also establishes a design-construct-operate-maintain-finance arrangement as an alternative financing method.

Every year the Prince George's County Council has made appropriate funding for our educational system and public school construction needs a legislative priority requiring partnership with the General Assembly. According to the Prince George's County Public School's Educational Facilities Master Plan, over \$8.5 billion is still needed in three cycles over the next 20 years (2017-2036) to fully modernize building systems and components, repair or replace our existing schools, or expand existing capacities.ⁱ Alternative funding sources are critical to ensuring that adequate educational facilities are provided to meet the needs of the over 129,000 students and nearly 23,000 full and part-time employees that we serve.

School overcrowding and deterioration of facilities are major problems that we share in common across the State. However, because each public school district is also unique, with varying needs, a singular approach to school renovation and construction is problematic. SB994 takes into account the work and recommendations of the 21st Century School Facilities Commission by offering flexibility and a new avenue for all jurisdictions in Maryland to seek financing for school construction, and to do so utilizing efficient, effective, economical, and innovative ways.

Our children deserve a comfortable, safe, secure, accessible, well illuminated, well ventilated, and aesthetically pleasing environment in which to learn and grow. We believe this very comprehensive bill is a creative approach to reduce overcrowding, repair old buildings, and accelerate construction of new buildings; and will help us to achieve our school construction and renovation goals so we can provide our children with the facilities they require in order to do their very best work.

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Prince George's County Council

SB 994 School Overcrowding Reduction Act of 2017 – SUPPORT

Therefore, the Prince George's County Council appreciates the opportunity to offer its **SUPPORT** for SB 994. We respectfully request your favorable consideration of our position.

Prepared by: Tony Perez
 LA Perez Consulting
 Jennifer A. Jenkins
 On behalf of Prince George's County Council

ⁱ <http://www1.pgcps.org/cip/index.aspx?id=215244>



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

(HB 1080)
Delegate
Jay Walker

Education – Universal Prekindergarten – Established

POSITION:

SUPPORT

HB 1080 Education – Universal Prekindergarten – Established expands public prekindergarten to all four-year-old children in Maryland regardless of family income, thus ensuring that these children are able to receive at least a half-day of publicly funded prekindergarten education. The bill provides each local school system with a supplemental prekindergarten grant based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) eligible children (those who are four years old on September 1) enrolled in prekindergarten in the county on September 30 of the prior school year. The grant to each county is one-half of the State share of the per pupil foundation amount for each eligible FTE child.

Maryland has taken steps toward universal prekindergarten since at least the early 2000s. The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 required each local school system to make publicly funded prekindergarten available to economically disadvantaged four-year-old children in the State. To qualify as “economically disadvantaged,” a child must be from a family whose income is at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines. Chapter 2 of 2014 expanded prekindergarten services to additional eligible four-year-old children from families whose income is at or below 300% of federal poverty guidelines by establishing a competitive grant program to provide funding to qualified public and private prekindergarten providers. A report on prekindergarten expansion commissioned by the Maryland General Assembly recommended that the State offer universal, full-day prekindergarten for all four-year-olds in Maryland, by providing funding for 80% of Maryland’s four-year-olds to attend either a public prekindergarten program or a private program that has received a rating of Level 5 in Maryland EXCELS (the State’s tiered Quality Rating Improvement System for licensed child care centers, family child care providers, and public prekindergarten programs) or has national or state accreditation.ⁱ

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Prince George's County Council

HB 1080 Education – Universal Prekindergarten – Established – SUPPORT

Research shows that young children’s earliest learning experiences can have powerful long-term effects on their cognitive and emotional development, school achievement, and later life outcomes.ⁱⁱ We believe this research to be true. By developing and funding a Universal Prekindergarten program, we send a message that in Maryland our maxim is “Start Ahead, Stay Ahead.” And so, we look to the State to help support all Maryland children in the earliest years of life by investing in high-quality prekindergarten programs.

For these reasons, the Prince George’s County Council offers its **SUPPORT** of HB 1080, in an effort of narrowing the achievement gap, increasing the graduation rate and improving student success across our State. We respectfully request your favorable consideration of our position.

Prepared by: Tony Perez
 LA Perez Consulting
 Jennifer A. Jenkins
 On behalf of Prince George’s County Council

ⁱ <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Documents/adequacystudy/AppendicesAE112916.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://standleadershipcenter.org/sites/standleadershipcenter.org/files/media/WWSF-PreKindergarten.pdf>



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

(HB 425/SB 651)
Delegate Lierman/
Senator Smith

Public Schools – Suspensions and Expulsions

POSITION:

SUPPORT

HB425/SB651 - Public Schools - Suspensions and Expulsions prohibits a child from being suspended or expelled from a public prekindergarten program. Further, the bill allows a student enrolled in kindergarten or first or second grade to be suspended or expelled if the student knowingly (1) brings a firearm to school or (2) possesses a firearm at school.

Recent data indicates that expulsions and suspensions occur with regularity in preschool settings, which is problematic given that research suggests that these practices often serve to hinder the social-emotional development of a child during this highly formative period. On December 10, 2014, the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Education released a joint letter advising that suspension and expulsion trends “warrant immediate attention from the early childhood and education fields.”ⁱ The letter went on to explain that “[t]he earliest years of a child's life are critical for building the foundation of learning and wellness needed for future success in school and later in life. During these years, children's brains are developing rapidly, influenced by their experiences, both positive and negative.”

According to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), a total of 89 prekindergarten students were suspended or expelled from school in the 2015-2016 school year. This number includes in-school and out-of-school suspensions. The highest amounts were in Prince George's County (17) and Baltimore City (11). Also, MSDE reports that 2,363 students in pre-K through second grade were suspended out of school or expelled during the 2015-2016 school year, an increase of 17.5% over the previous school year.ⁱⁱ We find these numbers to be disturbing and disappointing. While we recognize the need for teachers to maintain control in the classroom in order to progress children academically, helping to develop their social and behavioral skills should also be part of the goal. And, so we believe a more positive approach is needed, one that will not reinforce bad behavior, or expose 3 and 4 year olds to harmful models of problem solving like exclusionary discipline.

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Public Schools – Suspensions and Expulsions – SUPPORT

We look forward to seeing immediate policy changes Statewide in order to fix this trend and protect small children from the negative outcomes associated with removing them from their classrooms. Therefore, the Prince George’s County Council offers its strong **SUPPORT** of this bill and looks forward to a reversal of policy in order to prevent unnecessary suspensions and expulsions, and to improve outcomes for all children in Maryland Public Schools. We respectfully request your favorable consideration of our position.

Prepared by: Tony Perez
 LA Perez Consulting
 Jennifer A. Jenkins
 On behalf of Prince George’s County Council

ⁱ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/hhs_and_ed_joint_letter.pdf

ⁱⁱ 2015-2016 Maryland Public School Suspensions, Expulsions, and Health Related Exclusions report



THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

(301) 952-3700
County Council

POSITION STATEMENT

(SB 244)
Senator
Barbara Robinson

Task Force to Study Suspension Rates of African
American Prekindergarten Students

POSITION:

SUPPORT

SB 244 - Task Force to Study Suspension Rates of African American Prekindergarten Students would (1) determine whether African American students are suspended at a higher rate than students of other races, (2) determine the resources available to remedy these suspensions and (3) make recommendations to deter these suspensions.

Recent data indicates that expulsions and suspensions occur with regularity in preschool settings, which is problematic given that research suggests that these practices hinder the social-emotional development of a child during this highly formative period. On December 10, 2014, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education released a letter advising that suspensions and expulsions trends “warrant immediate attention from the early childhood and education fields.”ⁱ The letter went on to explain that “[t]he earliest years of a child's life are critical for building the foundation of learning and wellness needed for future success in school and later in life. During these years, children's brains are developing rapidly, influenced by their experiences, both positive and negative.”

A 2016 report from the Office for Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Education noted that African American public prekindergarten children in the United States are 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions as White students.ⁱⁱ According to Maryland State Department of Education, a total of 89 prekindergarten students were suspended or expelled from school in the 2015-2016 school year. This includes in-school and out-of-school suspensions. The highest amounts were in Prince George's County (17) and Baltimore City (11). An informal review by this Council of the data within our school system was indeed troubling. And after reviewing statewide statistics and national data, the numbers seem to point to certain groups of children being punished at disproportionately high rates.

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Prince George's County Council

**SB 244 Task Force to Study Suspension Rates of African American Prekindergarten Students –
SUPPORT**

While we support the prohibition of prekindergarten suspensions and expulsions, we recognize that more in-depth review may be necessary in order to effect a Statewide policy change. Therefore, the Prince George's County Council offers its **SUPPORT** for SB244. Studying the suspension rates of prekindergarten students in Maryland as is provided for within the bill, is an important step in determining how to best serve our children and improve their chances for success.

Prepared by: Tony Perez
 LA Perez Consulting
 Jennifer A. Jenkins
 On behalf of Prince George's County Council

ⁱ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/hhs_and_ed_joint_letter.pdf

ⁱⁱ <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>