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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Submits Written Testimony Urging the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners to Oppose Arming School Police During School Hours

As the Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (the Board) prepares to meet tonight, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) today submitted [written testimony](#) urging the Board to oppose new legislation changing state law that prohibits Baltimore School Police (BSP) officers from carrying firearms on school grounds during school hours. This testimony builds on LDF's prior letters to the Board on this issue from [October 11, 2018](#) and [January 22, 2019](#).

Last month, the Board unanimously voted against arming school police during the school day but is now reconsidering the issue following the shooting at Frederick Douglass High School earlier this month. LDF's testimony calls on the Board to instead address the tragic incident by requesting Frederick Douglass High School administrators and BSP conduct an after-action investigation of the February 8 shooting and use the results of that investigation to make evidence-based updates to school procedures relating to visitors.

Additionally, to the extent that the new bill seeks to expand school police ability to patrol city streets, LDF cautions the Board that BSP is allowed to patrol off school grounds through an agreement with the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), which has done a poor job managing arrests and complaints involving BSP. This year, the federal court-ordered agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the BPD requires the police department to evaluate its agreement with BSP and make needed changes. Maryland legislators should not hinder the policing reform requirements of this federal consent decree by making changes to state law that have already been rejected by the Board and many Baltimore residents.

As LDF's testimony adds:

“Allowing officers to carry guns in schools especially endangers Black students because the judgment of the very people charged with keeping them safe is often clouded by the implicit, and sometimes explicit, bias that is endemic in our society.”

Read LDF's newly submitted testimony [here](#).

Read LDF's testimony from October 2018 [here](#).

Read LDF's testimony from January 2019 [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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