



For Immediate Release
Tuesday, February 26, 2019

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

LDF Statement on Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners Vote to Support Arming School Police During School Day

The Baltimore City Board of School Commissioners (the Board) voted 8-2 to support a measure aimed at changing state law and allowing Baltimore School Police (BSP) officers to carry a firearm during the school day. For the third time in four months, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) submitted [written testimony](#) before the hearing to urge the Board to oppose this new legislation. [Monique Dixon](#), Deputy Policy Director and Senior Counsel at LDF, issued the following statement:

“LDF has joined Baltimore residents in raising concerns about arming school police three times in four months because we know who will be hurt most by it: Black students. We understand that the school board is alarmed by the tragic incident at Frederick Douglass High School this month – we are too. But this vote is the latest in an unfortunate national pattern of addressing the complex problem of keeping students and staff safe with shortsighted non-solutions. Responses to school shootings require careful and dispassionate consideration, not kneejerk reactions. Three school police officers were reportedly onsite during the violence at Frederick Douglass High School, and there’s no reason to believe the ability to use a firearm would have prevented the shooting. The Board had the opportunity to request a meticulous review of school safety measures – including visitor protocols – and promote the long-term security of Baltimore students and staff. Instead, they voted to expose the school community to more guns.

“We will continue to highlight the unintended harm students, particularly those of color, may experience with an armed police force during school hours. We challenge the Board not to abandon their long-held beliefs in support of a reactionary bill that was overwhelmingly opposed only a few weeks ago. Baltimore students and school personnel deserve a forceful but narrowly-tailored response to the safety threats they face, and we hope lawmakers and school board commissioners alike will prioritize measures that will keep schools safe without inflicting harm.”

Read LDF’s testimony from February 2019 opposing the arming of BSP [here](#).

Read LDF’s testimony from January 2019 opposing the arming of BSP [here](#).

Read LDF’s testimony from October 2018 opposing the arming of BSP [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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