

Montgomery County Delegation Public Hearing, December 6, 2010

Paula Bienenfeld

Education Committee Chair, Montgomery County Civic Federation

Thank you. My name is Paula Bienenfeld. I am the Education Committee Chair for the Montgomery County Civic Federation, and am speaking on behalf of the Federation regarding Senator Madaleno's bill, MC 11-11.

I would like to address MC 11-11 which is an attempt to change the permitting process in the County. We recently saw the County's Board of Education, which controls a state agency, the Montgomery County Public School system, work to override our municipalities, when the City of Rockville denied permits to MCPS because the installation of portable trailers at College Garden Elementary School does not meet the City's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. The portables do not meet the City's fire safety provisions. Nevertheless, the Board of Education will vote tomorrow on a proposal to open the portables and overrule the City of Rockville. Because of the current legislation (Article 66B, para 3.08 b2 of the Maryland Annotated Code), a public discussion will be held at the Board of Education, as required and a vote will be taken. It is my understanding that the bill proposes two things at least: a. allow the county to override a municipality's right to safeguard the safety and health of its citizens; and b. take away the sunshine on the decision, so that public discussion and a public vote would not be required. The Civic Federation is in favor of sunshine; we are opposed to secret discussions. Therefore we oppose this bill.

Thank you.