



# Hollis, Cronan & Fronk, P.A.

William C. Hollis III  
Philip T. Cronan  
Gordon D. Fronk

December 11, 2018

Honorable Christopher T. Adams  
6 Bladen Street, Room 326  
Annapolis, Md. 21401

Re: *Talbot County Board of Elections*

Dear Delegate Adams:

I represent Talbot County Board of Elections (the “Board”). The purpose of this letter is to request your consideration to sponsor legislation making it mandatory that all public schools in the State of Maryland are closed on the dates of the Primary and General Elections (collectively referred to as “Election Day”).

Maryland contains 1,428 public school and currently educates approximately 893,689 students.<sup>1</sup> Maryland law provides that Calvert, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Talbot, and Worcester Counties may remain open and in session on Election Day. *See* Md. Code, Education Art., §7–103(c)(4).

Presently, Caroline, Kent, and Talbot Counties are the only school districts in the State that remain open on Election Day. These counties contain roughly .014% of the total Maryland student population (12,426<sup>2</sup> students of 893,689 students). Most recently, only Caroline and Talbot Counties remained open to students on Election Day in those counties in which at least one public school was utilized as a polling place.<sup>3</sup>

According to the data published by Talbot County Public Schools (“TCPS”), the school system is comprised of two high schools, two middle schools, and six elementary schools and currently serves a school age population of 4,646 students.<sup>4</sup> By nature of being the county public schools, their geographic locations are known by a large portion of the general population. Additionally, characteristics that describe public schools mirror the characteristics that sound election sites require.

---

<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender and Number of Schools, September 30, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Kent County Public Schools remained open but was not in session for students.

<sup>4</sup> Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Public Schools Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity and Gender and Number of Schools, September 30, 2017.

In previous election cycles, the Board has struggled to find appropriate sites for voters that match the adequacy of the public schools. The selection of sites and the ability to utilize them is a never-ending effort by the Board.

The Board and TCPS have struggled to facilitate elections in its two high schools while the schools are open to students. Despite each parties' best efforts, conducting an election in schools open to students has presented both organizations with conflicting missions. Talbot County has limited options and the public schools are undoubtedly necessary to conduct a proper and accessible election.

The Board believes it is imperative that it offer an environment most conducive to a proper and accessible election. Given TCPS's position to have schools remain open to students during Election Day and, consequently, interfering with Talbot County's polling place sites, the Board looks to the State's elected officials to secure that all elections will be held in the most suitable environment to conduct a proper election.

Please see the enclosed correspondence from the President of the Talbot County Education Association in support of the Board's request for legislation to close session for students in all public schools during the Election Day.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,  
*Philip Cronan*  
Philip Cronan

Cc: Talbot County Board of Elections  
Talbot County Board of Elections/Correspondences/Outgoing-Letter: Adams 2018.12.11