Baltimore Afro-American

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The bond issues

On November 6, Baltimore voters will cast a ballot on twelve bond issues, totalling over 64 million dollars. The funding of the loans according to the mayor's office will keep the city on course with its six year Capital Improvement Program.

In the interest of ensuring that our readers will be able to make an informed choice, we are listing the bond issues and asking our readers to study them carefully. In an edition prior to election day we will list the ballot questions and which way we feel the citizenry should vote on them.

Question A is a Community Development Loan of $12 million. These monies will enable the city to continue to receive Federal block grants. Part of the money will go into housing rehabilitation, park development, and aiding self-help efforts of neighborhoods. It will also provide funds for Market Center, the vicinity of Howard and Lexington Sts., Charles Street, and the Harbor area to encourage private investment by making improvements.

Question B is a $4.9 million loan to fund improvements at the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore Museum of Art, the Maryland Science Center, and the proposed City Life Museum to be located in Jonestown.

Question C is a $6 million Industrial and Commercial Financing Loan. This money will be used to provide direct loans and guarantee bank loans to commercial and industrial businesses for aquisition, expansion and modernization of their plants and stores. It will also aid in the construction of new commercial and industrial facilities. This money will also be used to leverage other sources of funding.

Question D is a $2 million Recreation and Parks Loan. Half of it will go to make improvements at the Baltimore Zoo. The other half of the money will go to make improvements at Leakin Park.

Question E is a $9.5 million Economic Development Loan. The money will be used to attract high technology research and development firms to the city. Existing industrial areas will be upgraded. Additional real estate will be added to existing industrial parks. Start up space will be created and start up costs will be minimized. A venture capital loan program will be initiated. Another part of the money will complement private investments by local merchants in neighborhood shopping areas.

Question F is a $2.5 million Civic Center Loan. This money will be used to modernize the Civic Center.

Question G is a $2.5 million Jail Loan to add 200 new cells and build a jail industries program which trains inmates in vocational skills.

Question H is a $1 million Solid Waste Loan which will fund improvements to three sanitary waste disposal facilities.

Question I is a $4 million Housing Development Loan which will provide below market interest loans or loan guarantees to qualified developers to expand the existing housing stock of the city. It will fund new construction, renovation and adaptation of existing buildings to housing uses such as schools and industrial lofts.

Question J is a $3 million Residential Financing Loan. This loan will provide low interest loans to homeowners to enable them to renovate their present housing.

Question K is a 10 million loan for streets and bridges. The money will be used to fund reconstruction, rehabilitation and repair streets, bridges, and highways.

Question L is a $6 million School Loan. This money will provide the city's share of State supported school construction. Part of the money will be used for major renovations at Garrison Junior High, Roland Park Elementary/Middle School. Four million dollars will be used to replace deteriorated roofs at many city schools. Two schools, Francis Scott Key Elementary and Roland Park Middle School/Elementary will be equipped using the funds.

LETTER

Images of Provident Hospital

Rumors have polluted the air about Provident Hospital and its future as a valiant provider of medical and dental services to the Baltimore community.

Many of those rumors have been predicated on media insinuations and curbstone innuendo, resulting from insurance company decisions relative to their desire not to pay for the superior treatment provided by Provident and her sister so-called "high cost hospitals," Johns Hopkins, University, Sinai, etc. which have, as a matter of policy, chosen to maintain superior care not withstanding cost.

Some of the rumors are derived from the minds of persons who have never had reason or occasion to utilize the good services of Provident Hospital. They rely only on their imagination and prejudices. Those prejudices are based on race, a yardstick by which the rumor mongers themselves would not like to be measured.

Yes, Provident is not perfect, as no hospital is perfect. But, by and large, Provident is measured by a yardstick which was fashioned many years ago before the hospital was removed from the antiquated second-handed quarters on Division and McMechen Streets and before so many of our black professionals made the sacrifices to study and quality as specialists and-or super specialist and settled in Baltimore to take care of their people.

Only a small part of the "cursing of the darkness" relative to Provident Hospital is actually due to adverse experiences at the facility. In some instances misunderstanding arises as a result of communication deficits.

To his knowledge no one has been intentionally injured or insulted by Provident Hospital in the years of this writer's association with the institution. Yet the defect persists in our ethnocentrism.

Provident has given 90 years of service to the Baltimore community. While they have not been perfect years they have been superior when evaluated against the background of her history and the history of those peoples who she was established to serve.

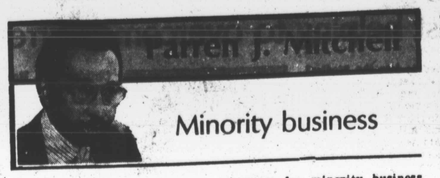
They have been years of casting off the shackles of our heritage. They have been years of improvement; they have been years of quality. And, as is the case of any institution which strives for excellence, they have been years of some sour grapes and misconception.

The Provident record of meeting professional challenges and emerging victorious is a splendid one and one which is getting better. It's greatest embarrassement is the reluctance of its own people to patronize her.

The source of many of her tears is the idea shared by many blacks of the city that going elsewhere than Provident is a badge of prestige rather than the shroud of shame which it really is. Why bypass the best treatment because of racial identification?

This is a reminder from the president of the staff of Provident Hospital, asking you to think first of Provident when you have medical needs and think of a Provident staff physician or dentist to deliver your care.

ERNEST O. BROWN
M.D., F.A.C.S.



Parren J. Mitchell — Minority business

This week's column was written by Bruce Gamble, Legislative Staff Director for Congressman Parren J. Mitchell.

Ronald Reagan has developed quite a style in promoting his accomplishments, however many of his statements are at the least distorted. A case in point is his recent statements on how great his administration has been for minority business.

In a recent question and answer period, Congressman Mitchell revealed the true, almost sordid story of Reagan's mistreatment of minority business.

Q: How do you view the Reagan administration's commitment to minority business economic development?

Congressman Mitchell's response:

A: The current administration's malignant neglect of critical issues facing the survival of the minority business community is the worse I have seen in my 14 years in Congress. Let me cite three examples:

In 1981, this administration began a vicious process of earmarking 50 of the top minority businesses for abrupt removal from the Small Business Administration (SBA) 8(a) program, which is the Federal government's only minority business development program. Minorities in this country would have lost thousands of jobs had it not been for mounting public pressure that persuaded the administration to reverse its course.

In an August 1982 statement, President Reagan said that "his administration will make available aproximately $1.5 billion in credit assistance to promote minority business development." The fact of the matter is, in every budget submission to Congress, Reagan has proposed the elimination of the SBA Direct Loan Program, the largest Federal financial assistance program for minority business owners.

While Congress has refused to comply with this draconian approach, SBA has nonetheless made fewer and fewer loans to minority businesses.

President Reagan said that the Federal government would purchase an estimated $15 billion in goods and services directly from Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) during fiscal years 1983 through 1985. Actual statistics indicate that the percentage of dollars being awarded to MBEs has decreased under this administration from 3.4 percent in FY 1980 to 3.1 percent at the end of the FY 1983.

Q: In recent months, there appears to have emerged a concerted attack on affirmative action programs. It would appear that the minority business programs are in the middle of this fight. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court was recently asked to review a case from Dade County, Florida involving a black business set-aside program. What is this case about?

A: The Reagan administration, with Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds in charge of the civil rights division at the Justice Department, has declared war on the concept of affirmative action in every one of its applications. This administration, with no perceived alternative, has even courted groups that support the elimination of affirmative action.

This is no more apparent that its association with the Associated General Contractors of America (AGCA). This organization is leading the attack on minority business affirmative action programs and has spent enormous sums of money for this crusade.

While flooding the Congress with literature on the alleged negative impacts of minority business set-aside programs, they have been invited by top White House officials and other prominent figures in the administration to discuss how their industry has been victimized by reverse discrimination.

To support the above assertion, the U.S. Department of Justice interceded in a case in Dade County, Florida earlier this year on behalf of the Associated General Contractors which involved a Black business set-aside ordinance for construction contracts.

The Justice Department, under the leadership of Reynolds, tried to convince the court that this ordinance was unconstitutional. Fortunately, neither the lower courts nor the U.S. Supreme Court accepted this racist argument.

While the administration lost this limited battle, I am convinced that it will continue to use the courts and any other available mechanism to end the few gains made by minorities as a result of affirmative action.

As former Congressman Robert Drinan put it, "clearly, such a repudiation of affirmative action violates the spirit and even the letter of that vast body of law, custom and practice which has developed since 1965."

Q: Recently you gave a speech before the National Cable Television Association. What were some of the areas of concern you expressed regarding this growth industry and the level of minority business participation?

A: To a very large extent, the rebirth of the anti-Black anti-minority climate in America is a direct result of the Reagan administration's posture and attitude toward the victims of institutional discriminatory practices.

It is within this context that minority cable entrepreneurs must struggle for an equitable share of the multi-billion dollar cable industry. Presently, minorities own less than one percent of the more than 5,000 cable television systems in the U.S.

The SBA's 30 percent lending limit for telecommunication ventures further cripples efforts by minority entrepreneurs to procure the capital necessary to gain access into this industry.

This being the case, every effort must be made to legislate opportunities for minority entrepreneurs in the telecommunication industry. This legislative initiative must permeate all levels of government, and must be enforced.

Anthony Armstrong — Family friend or enemy

These people didn't care one bit about the children. All they were trying to do was show how powerful they were. The social worker, handling the case, was the closest thing to a psychological child abuser I have ever seen or heard.

She got great pleasure out of watching the children's mother and grandmother suffer from seeing three little children hurt and afraid.

There was mistrust, there was lying and, there was a total misunderstanding of the role of the extended family, in the lives of black people.

On second thought, they, the social workers, did understand the role of the extended family; what they were trying to do is destroy the effectiveness of something they found reasons to envy.

There are white people out there who are intent on making our methods of caring for our children look like something that is bad and dirty. They think that the aunts and the cousins and the grandparents of little black children are just "someone we don't trust".

Frankly, I'm sick of the department of social services and the people that represent it trying to make our methods of rearing our children look like a perversion, just because those representatives don't bring their children up the same way.

In this case, the representatives of the department of social services took the position that "if it ain't white, it ain't right."

Oh, yes they used all manner of dicta, which is a nice word for verbal "bull", to support why the grandmother of three little children could not continue to take care of those children.

They said that the grandmother was dishonest, just because the grandmother had unknowingly signed a form to get a few dollars from the foster care agency, to help her defray the cost of caring for the children.

When in fact, the grandmother had only signed the form after speaking with "someone" at the agency who told her it was perfectly right to do so. After they were not able to convince the young mother of these children to "rat" on her own mother, the social services representatives then insisted that there must be some plot between the mother and the grandmother of these three children.

There was a plot all right: to keep these three children in the good care of their grandmother, when the social services agency wants to move them to a state run institution.

The children are two, three and, six years old. Now which is better, a good home with grandma and, the access to and of love of an extended family, or sending three very young children to a state home?

Yes, there are other circumstances, some of which are terrible. However, if the issue is the good care of the children, the state would have a hard time proving that such care was not being given.

These people who represented the state, however, were not the least bit interested in what was good for those children.

What they were interested in is making sure the grandmother didn't get any of the state's money (money these people seem to protect as if it were their own personal funds), that the grandmother couldn't continue to be the main influence in the children's lives and, that the mother of the children would suffer still one more indignity.

They were interested in saying, "Look, we're white and we've got the power over this black family, so we've all got to stick together against them."

I don't know what is going to happen to this troubled family, that has its share of today's tortured social problems; but, I do know that without some real help they are in for even more trouble, frustration and, hurt to these children.

The social workers I talked with and saw in action, at the court hearing, are not the help this family needs. How can there be a positive outcome when all the things being fed into this situation are negative?

How can the family be helped if the supposed source of help, these social workers, are doing everything they can to cause more problems? The case is still before the court and the judge in the case has a fine reputation for fairly and objectively reviewing all the facts in a case.

The fact is care, however, how much the social workers need to learn something about black families. They need to learn, at least, that a loving grandmother beats a state institution anytime.

They need to learn that we know how to love our children too.

Samuel L. Banks — ASALH 69th convention

The 69th Annual Convention of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (i.e., ASALH) meets in Washington, D.C. at the Washington Shoreham during this weekend (i.e., October 17-21) during a period of enormous crisis and peril for 35 million black Americans.

It is, indeed, ironic that on September 9, 1915 in Chicago, Illinois when ASALH was founded by the highly revered and inimitable Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson over 16 million black Americans were in danger.

In 1915, at the time of the founding of ASALH, the dangers and restrictions for black Americans were overt and caustic. Today, racism and bigotry are less obvious and covert, but, nonetheless, even more debilitating and crushing.

Black Americans, in the contemporary American social order, as a result of over 365 years of institutional racism, studied and systematic neglect, traducement, and hostility of the majority white society have been driven to the edge of the precipice.

As the fourteenth national president of ASALH and a practicing social scientist and educator, I am fully cognizant of the tenuous and perilous state of black America. My leadership of ASALH and the deliberations of ASALH's 69th Annual Convention are attuned to not only the intellectual imperatives of the world of ideas, but, too, the demands of black survival and renewal.

ASALH's 69th Annual Convention will feature over 45 learned papers by scholars from throughout the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Africa. The papers will accentuate both theoretical and pragmatic issues ranging from Africa, Southern Africa in particular, the antebellum period, school desegregation, racism in the United States and other human and civil rights issues.

Resolutions will also be adopted pertaining to South Africa, Namibia, Central America, affirmative action, school desegregation, plight of black colleges and universities and other pressing issues.

ASALH, historically, since its founding by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, universally regarded as the "Father of Black History," has been in a position of advocacy for black Americans through scholarly research, reflection and action. To its credit, 69 years later, ASALH remains firmly committed to a posture of strong and unrelenting advocacy and witness for black Americans.

Dr. Woodson, to his great credit, had the uncanny ability, in the midst of prodigious pressures and stress, to cut through to the heart of complex issues.

We must act in the spirit of the words expressed in the grand anthem of the Civil Rights Movement:
We are not afraid,
We are not afraid,
We are not afraid today
Oh, deep in my heart,
I do believe—
WE ARE NOT AFRAID TODAY."

Let us be on our way to secure our full MANHOOD - WOMANHOOD RIGHTS AS AMERICAN CITIZENS NOW.

Question P — Should there be an elected school board?

The future of public education in Baltimore City is threatened by Question P, a seductive proposal to elect a school board. The stakes are high, and we are compelled to address this issue forthrightly.

Question P would change the rules of the game in the educational arena by seriously diminishing the powers of a future black mayor. It would wipe out the current black majority on the school board and, instead of improving accountability, would diffuse accountability for achieving educational goals for Baltimore City.

We are elected officials from Baltimore City with a history of involvement and support for educational issues. We hold key leadership positions in the state legislature where we have developed a reputation for being strong advocates of the Baltimore City Public School System.

During the 1984 Session of the General Assembly, we played key legislative roles in the passage of the Civiletti Commission recommendations that brought $24 million in additional aid to the Baltimore City schools and contains a five year commitment of over $200 million of new monies for improving teachers' salaries, enhancing educational programs and addressing the adequate level of supplies and equipment for the city classrooms.

We are committed to be in the forefront of efforts in the 1985 Session to increase the Baltimore share of educational funding. Because we believe that strengthening public education must be a paramount goal at this critical stage in the city's development, we are left with no alternative but to vigorously oppose the adoption of the amendment to the City Charter that would require an elected school board.

Currently, some of the challenges facing the public school system are low teacher and administrative personnel morale, poor student achievement test scores, breaches of security and an inability to meet the needs of special populations in the schools.

Since all of these problems are related to inadequate resources, any major structural changes in the system should address these problems, contribute to the improvement of the quality of instruction for our young people in the classroom and positively impact funding sources.

Funding for public education is the largest budget item and the single most compelling issue in Baltimore and in any urban setting. Under the present system, the mayor is able to exert influence on the budgetary process and help determine the level of funding for public schools.

The merit of this linkage continues to increase with each annual funding cycle and proved invaluable during the past year. We remind you that the recent significant expansion in funding for educational programming in Baltimore was made possible because of broad community support for the Civiletti Commission recommendations.

The issue of an elected school board does not enjoy a consensus of the educational community nor among the various communities of Baltimore whose support is needed if we are to upgrade the system and enlarge the financial base.

Another element that we invite you to consider is that the creation of an elected school board would relieve the chief executive of responsibility for cultivating the city's educational climate and would diffuse educational direction and decision-making.

Furthermore, the change to a district-by-district elected school board would mean that no single person could be held accountable for

Elected officials' position

educational policies thereby allowing everyone to escape responsibility.

If we agree that one of the most critical issues is the quality of education, then any reduction in accountability substantially weakens the system.

Inasmuch as the city's chief executive appoints school board members with the approval of the Baltimore City Council when promised results are not attained or problems arise such as low test scores, the mayor can affix blame on the school board and replace individual members as warranted.

We need to take time to assess the demands for change and weigh carefully the potential long range effect especially in view of the almost near certainty that a black person will be elected chief executive of Baltimore City in the near future.

We believe that the current sphere of authority in the educational arena should be preserved so that a black mayor may enjoy comparable latitude in establishing educational direction and policies for the city.

An elected school board would deprive a black mayor of an opportunity to provide vitally needed educational leadership, construct responsiveness to constituents citywide and prohibit the maximization of influence on the quality of classroom instruction.

If a strong linkage does not exist between the policy-making body of the school system and the city's executive budget, experience indicates that often tensions result between the Board and City Hall. This gives rise to public displays of "stand-offs" which undermine public confidence in the school system.

We call your attention to the fact that several of the largest school systems, including Philadelphia and Chicago, have long had appointed school boards.

This has enabled Mayors Wilson Goode and Harold Washington to exercise political responsibility for the educational direction of their cities, whereas Mayor Andrew Young of Atlanta is denied this vital role in the educational process because his city has an elected board.

Experience has demonstrated that an elective school board exacerbates political influence on educational practices rather than diminishes it.

Former D.C. Superintendent Vincent Reed cautioned that he "found an appointed board far less political than an elected board" and that decisions by an appointed board are more likely to be based on educational reasons.

Blacks have used the political process to expand their involvement in the decisions that affect their destiny. We believe that it would be shortsighted to support a process that would severely reduce the number of blacks on the Baltimore City School Board.

In concluding, we share with you a recent occurrence. Several of our constituents and friends have commented to us that initially the idea of an elected school board sounded good, but upon reflection, they recognized that the change would be broad and lasting and not in the interest of the students in the public school system.

We also recognize the superficial attractiveness of the issue and its basic participatory appeal, but as your elected officials we ask that you think about the long term implications and what the change would mean for the quality of education and future leadership opportunities for our people. If you do, we are confident that you will also oppose the creation of an elected school board.

Vote NO on QUESTION P on November 6.

CLARENCE W. BLOUNT
Senator
HOWARD P. RAWLINGS
Delegate
WENDELL H. PHILLIPS
Delegate

BCTA position

The League of Women Voters, and the Baltimore Teachers Union have vigorously opposed Question P which gives the voters of Baltimore City their opportunity to decide for themselves whether they want an elected or appointed school board.

Much of this opposition is based on a "study" by the League. Readers might get the impression that this "study" was thorough and objective. However, the "study" was based on only 89 responses to a questionnaire about the school board and its function — 89 people out of the entire City!

The "study" does not address the fundamental issue: the public does not have the necessary power to influence the selection of board members nor the decisions that the board makes.

The League's basic position that the board should remain appointed is unsupportable. Studies indicate that there is no difference in the quality of people serving on boards, whether elected or appointed. Logically, then, the choice for the voters should be to opt for the democratic process in electing members.

In their summary of important ideas and concerns in their "study," the League states: "There was much less interest in the elected vs. appointed school board issue than we anticipated there might be, although the survey form had been carefully designed so as to avoid deliberately stimulating this issue unless it arose spontaneously."

There was more interest in the qualities and credentials of board members and how the Mayor got input for potential appointees.

The League is presenting a proposal to form an advisory council to the Mayor that would generate a pool of qualified candidates.

This "advisory" group would add yet another layer to the bureaucracy and still prevent direct decision-making on board members by the public. There will be no legal means to prevent the Mayor from going outside the pool for candidates to appoint.

Since the League produced no analysis of city school boards, past or present, they cannot prove their hypothesis that the current system is working properly to the benefit of the entire community.

Ninety percent of the school boards in the country are elected. 10 county school boards in Maryland are elected. Prince Georges County, 40 percent black in racial composition, has had an elected board for 20 years.

And since the League has allegedly been a non-partisan organization for so many years, we question the League's motives for being pushed to the forefront to oppose an elected board for Baltimore City. Has the League actually taken a vote of its own members on the issue?

The Baltimore Teachers Union has not taken a vote of its members. Teachers were told by Mrs. Dandridge that the executive board of the Union had the power under its by-laws to speak for all the teachers even though many teachers from the Union signed the petitions and worked with the community to obtain the 18,000 signatures to get the question on the ballot for November 6.

We urge you to vote YES on QUESTION P.

GODFREY MOORE
Executive Director
Baltimore City Teachers Association, NEA

BTU position

The Baltimore Teachers Union urges all Baltimore City voters to vote against Question P on the November ballot.

Question P, which calls for an elected school board, sounds very democratic. As the representative of all Baltimore City teachers and para-professionals, the Baltimore Teachers Union wholeheartedly supports the concept of the people being allowed to democratically choose their school board members. But we believe that the poorly drafted Question P would seriously harm our city schools and our teachers.

Fewer than one quarter of Baltimore's registered voters are direct users of our public schools. This means that there is a potential for electing school board members who have little or no actual interest in our schools.

School Board candidates may even campaign on the issue of cutting, rather than improving, education. The three-quarters of the voters who don't use our schools may elect such candidates.

In addition, candidates with money and the backing of political machines would have a better chance of being elected, while minority candidates would lose out. The current racial and economic balance of the school board would be lost.

Candidates for school board may also use the position as a stepping stone to higher office. Their major concern would be pleasing their constituents. Politicians, not average citizens, would control our schools.

But the major problem with Question P is that it does not give the school board the power to levy taxes. Board negotiations with the unions would drag on for months, because the board would not have the knowledge or the power to reach an agreement with the unions that the mayor and council would also agree to. In the meantime, what happens to our children?

Let's do our homework before we push for an elected school board, not wait until it is too late and discover that Question P only creates problems, rather than solving them. Vote no on Question P.

IRENE B. DANDRIDGE
President

Dear Voters:

I have been asked by the editors of the AFRO-AMERICAN to state my opinion as to the advisability of changing from an appointed to an elected school board.

My answer is that I am strongly against changing to an elected school board and urge all those citizens concerned about public education to vote NO on Question P on election day.

Almost 100 years ago, Baltimore City changed from an elected to an appointed school board because of the corruption and political interference attributed to the elected board. In my opinion, no good reason has been given for going back to an elected board.

An elected board would destroy accountability. Who would the voters appeal to if they wanted to upgrade their schools? Today, the mayor is responsible. He appoints the board and approves the budget.

If voters are unhappy, they can vote for a new mayor. With an elected board, no one is responsible. The mayor will say, "I did not elect the board — talk to them." The board will say, "Go talk to the mayor, he allocates the money."

It costs $20,000 or more to run a district-wide election. Where will the average parent get this kind of money? Moreover, most voters do not have children in public schools. Many communities have seen a board elected which wants to cut

Superintendent's position

back on education funding to reduce taxes.

Finally, this proposal is particularly threatening to the black community. In the foreseeable future, Baltimore may have its first black mayor. If Question P passes, this new mayor will lose control over the largest City Agency which has the biggest budget.

White mayors during this entire century have had the power to appoint the school board. Now that the racial composition of the voters is changing, some want to take this power away.

The tragedy of this issue is that it is dividing people of good will who want to upgrade our schools from focusing on the real issue — fair and adequate funding which will result in smaller class sizes, more textbooks, higher teacher salaries, etc.

An elected school board, having no power to tax or approve a budget, will have no ability to affect this basic question. If anything, robbing future mayors of the responsibility for education will excuse them from getting priority to education. Money will be spent only through the mayor on areas where he is accountable, and education will be again short-changed.

Let us stop debating irrelevancies and focus on the real issue — funding equity for our children. As Superintendent of Public Instruction, I urge the citizens of Baltimore to vote against an elected school board. Vote NO to Question P on election day.

ALICE G. PINDERHUGHES
Superintendent of Public Instruction

NAACP position

The NAACP supports an elected school board. We thought the issue of the democratic process and its pros and cons had already been debated by the founding fathers of our country.

Although safeguards were installed by such devices as the electoral college, it was agreed at that time that the electoral process was the essence of democracy.

Thus, it becomes difficult to understand the opponents of the elected school board when they use such arguments as — the elected school board would be political, and therefore, detrimental to the educational system. However, let's examine the opposition arguments individually.

1. The elected school board would create "bufoonery, clowns, a circus atmosphere," etc. as indicated in an editorial in a daily newspaper earlier this month. Is this to say that our citizenry is so unintelligent that it cannot select competent representation? If this is the allegation, I don't agree.

I believe the citizens of Baltimore have, overall, acted responsibly in electing their officials. Why would this differ with the elected school board? Such as assertion is insulting and demeaning to the citizens of Baltimore.

2. The election would bring in unions, require contributions, produce politicians, etc. However, our present system functions in a manner, overall, acceptable to the community and has managed to tolerate and survive special interest. Why would an elected school board member not act in a similar fashion.

I believe that, generally, our elected officials act in the interest of the constituents more so than special interest and I see no reason for there to be a change because the subject is specifically education.

3. Some members of our black community argue — well why do this when we are about to get a black mayor. This could divest him or her of power.

Well, first of all, I remember we were supposed to be getting a black mayor when I was in high school — George Russell — and in 1984, we are still awaiting the arrival of same.

I don't mean to take away from the prospects of a black mayor in a majority black city; however, that has to be dealt with when that issue arrives. This issue is here now.

Further, this is not a racial issue but one of competence. It is not a divisive issue but one of accomplishments. Six board members are to be elected from the councilmatic districts and three at large. We don't know what the racial balance will be.

We only know that the electorate will make the best decision with all factors before it. However, I don't believe the black community can be insecure about its power at the polls and its ability to elect representatives in relationship to its numbers regardless of the past track record. We have to look to the future with optimism.

This leads to another argument being directed toward black voters. You have a majority on the board now, why risk this with an election process? I find this to be the most comical of all.

What difference does a black majority mean if these members are appointed and all serve at the pleasure of one person, the mayor. It doesn't matter if they all are green, as the expression goes.

Our mayor has demonstrated time and time again that his strict rule of law does not tolerate disagreement as evidenced by the removal and resignation of past school board presidents and superintendents.

And finally, the electorate does not represent adequately the lesser percentage of parents who have children in the schools. This suggests that all citizens don't have an interest in the education of the children. This is absurd.

The most selfish of people realize that education of our children is a development of our major natural resource and through education we all benefit by production of productive adults in the system.

Properly educated young men and women is an asset to all in our community. Edjucation reduces the statistics of crime, financial dependence, drugs, etc.

Further, a poll was just taken throughout the state whereas 60 percent of those polled statewide and 64 percent in Baltimore would not be opposed to higher taxes for higher spending in education if, in fact, it would increase the quality of education.

Thus, obviously this is in the interest of all of the citizens regardless of whether or not they have children in the public schools.

Last but not least, to argue that we have had this appointed system for years and therefore it must be the right one is the argument of stagnation and against change. The system, as we now have in Baltimore City, has been one that has deemphasized education in terms of priority.

Our city has put the development of buildings before the development of brains. True, the school board does not have the purse strings but a board that is accountable to the people, removable only by the people, is, therefore, an advocate of the interest of the people, and thus, an independent watchdog that will set policy in the right direction and challenge an administration going in the wrong direction.

Further, 80 percent of the political subdivisions in the nation have gone to an elected school board and 10 of the 24 counties in Maryland. These other jurisdictions cannot all be wrong.

In conclusion, I can find only one real argument against the elected school board, and that argument is only sound if you are in the power elite of Baltimore City. That is those who have power want to keep power. To disperse power. To disperse power to the electorate is to divest themselves of same.

History has taught us that power is never freely given or distributed, but only taken. The people should take this power and move forward to set a higher standard and priority for our educational system by voting for Question P — an elected school board — on November 6.

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