

August 19, 2023

State Senator John Bell, 13<sup>th</sup> District  
VSDB Board of Visitors Chair

Re: VSDB Board of Visitors Meeting on July 20, 2023

Dear Senator John Bell,

The purpose of this letter is to express my concerns regarding the VSDB BOV meeting that took place in Richmond on July 20, 2023. There is something that should not be swept under the rug; in this case it's the elephant in the room which was obviously ignored by most of the members of the BOV.

Upon my arrival from Staunton I was somewhat shocked to see the armed capitol police in bulletproof vests. This insulted me as well as the other deaf people who attended the meeting. This indicated that you considered us as "violent" protesters though we came peacefully.

In the meeting room we were told to sit in the area that was not ideal for us the deaf due to the pillars. Some of us were not able to see the board members speak. Some of the interpreters were not visible even on TV. The captions on TV were not great. Why couldn't we have a right to sit where we are comfortable?

It is my understanding that you have received a number of letters from some concerned people about the speakers being limited to one minute to speak. One minute for a deaf person who uses sign language is not accepted. I am certain that you know it requires more time to sign and fingerspell than a hearing person to speak.

Sadly audism toward the deaf still occurs many times at many places. Please stop it!

Thank you for reading this letter.

Sincerely,

Janice C. Dillman, VSDB Graduate Class of 1957

CC:

Patricia Trice, VSDB Superintendent  
Jason Miyares, Attorney General  
Aimee Guidera, Secretary of Education  
Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Senate  
Ghazala Hashmi, Vice-Chair  
Sally Hudson, Board Member  
John Avoli, Board Member  
Mike Asip, Board Member  
Vera Wilson, Board Member  
Carolyn Berry, Board Member  
JH Cline, Board Member  
Daphne Cox, Board Member  
Ronald Lanier, Board Member  
Christine Ogden, Board Member  
Glenn Youngkin, Governor of Virginia  
Michele VanBoxalaere, VSDAA President  
Michelle Long, VAD President