

On Mon, Mar 13, 2023 at 5:03 PM Nicole Poko <nicopoko@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Hobaugh and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed invitation of County Commissioner Susan Soloway, a controversial local politician, as a guest speaker in our Elementary School. As a concerned parent and member of the community, I believe it is essential to prioritize the education and well-being of our children and ensure they receive an environment that fosters diversity, inclusivity, and respect for all.

As you may not be aware, the proposed guest speaker most notably attended the "Stop The Steal" protest on January 6th, 2021 which was followed by the insurrection at the Capitol in which 5 people lost their lives. Soloway's attendance has been widely criticized by members of our community as well as local and national news outlets. All of this followed by a controversial letter to the public from the County Commissioners, including Soloway, which compared Black Lives Matter protests to the attack on the Capitol. Inviting such a person to speak in our schools sends the wrong message to our children and undermines the values of our education system and Democracy. Soloway has denied attendance at the riot, however admitted attendance to the protest that demanded action to stop the 2020 election results which they believed were stolen.

Schools are supposed to be safe and inclusive environments for our children, regardless of their backgrounds, beliefs, or political affiliations. Hosting a speaker who espouses divisive views could create an unwelcoming atmosphere that harms the emotional and psychological well-being of our children.

Moreover, bringing in a controversial local politician as a guest speaker could cause unnecessary disruption and create tensions within the community. It may also give rise to concerns about the impartiality and neutrality of our educational institutions. I am concerned that this visit would send a message to the community that the High Bridge schools align with Soloway's belief that American Democracy is broken and the 2020 election was stolen.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to reconsider the invitation of the controversial local politician as a guest speaker in our schools. Instead, let us focus on creating an inclusive and safe environment for our children to learn and grow.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Nicole Poko

more information on this matter can be found through the following websites:

<https://people.com/politics/several-republicans-who-attended-the-jan-6-capitol-rally-were-just-elected/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/31/us/capitol-riot-local-politicians.html>

<https://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/hunterdon-county/2021/01/12/hunterdon-county-commissioner-director-susan-soloway-blasts-trump-mob/6623251002/>

<https://newjerseyglobe.com/local/hunterdon-county-commissioner-took-part-in-pro-trump-protest-but-says-she-never-entered-u-s-capitol/>

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/flemington-slash-raritan/sections/government/articles/county-residents-call-soloway-s-decision-to-attend-jan-6-trump-rally-bad-judgment>