**Reasons to Renew Opposition to Absecon’s Severance Petition**

1. There is an unprecedented and unexpectedly high level of support in the community and among voters in Pleasantville to oppose Absecon's petition. Over 200 people signed the [objection letter](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/absecon_board_of_education_v._pleasantville_board_of_education_oal_dkt._no._edu_14364-2019s_.pdf) to the New Jersey Commissioner of Education and nearly 100 residents marched from Absecon to Pleasantville in protest against the petition on March 21, 2021. The objection letter and/or the March 21 march included many Pleasantville voters and residents including several school board members, City council members, the local NAACP chapter and the mayor.
2. There is a new understanding and awareness that Absecon’s efforts to break away is more than just about a handful of students. It is part of a larger pattern of racially motivated secessions being pursued across the state by the same team of highly paid lawyers and consultants hired by Absecon. Many state and even national civil rights leaders, attorney’s and organizations have recognized Absecon’s action as racially motivated, illegal and with dangerous precedent setting potential if approved. It has been formally and strongly condemned by both the [founder](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/plt_comments_re_absecon_petition.pdf) and current executive director of [New Jersey Education law Center.](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/elc_comments_on_absecon_termination_petition_3_24_draft_.pdf)
3. The Pleasantville BOE is on record in the state court of New Jersey as “vehemently opposing” Absecon’s petition on the grounds that it is racially motivated and harmful to the students and community of Pleasantville. Pleasantville submitted [a brief](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/civilcasejacket_pleasantville.pdf) to Judge Mary C. Jacobson at the Superior Court of New Jersey in Mercer County dated March 19, 2020 in the school segregation case known as Latino Action Network, et als. v. State of New Jersey. The brief from the Pleasantville BOE to the court reads:

*In response [to Absecon’s severance petition], the PBOE filed an answer in opposition and engaged the services of an expert, Terry Crowley, to draft a written report regarding what effect such a termination would have on the Pleasantville School District. In his report, Mr. Crowley, based upon the data provided by the Absecon Board of Education in its feasibility study, opined that if the Commissioner of Education granted the request, Pleasantville High School would become a 100% minority school. The PBOE is vehemently opposing Absecon's request.*

Pleasantville’s role in LAN case (a statewide school segregation lawsuit) would have guaranteed the district “a seat at the table” during consideration of a remedy after a ruling. Pleasantville’s reversal on the Absecon case will be disqualifying given that its primary argument for inclusion in the LAN case is based almost entirely on its vehement opposition to the Absecon petition.

1. When the Pleasantville BOE dropped its opposition to Absecon’s petition it relinquished not only its own power to defend the students and community of Pleasantville, but it severely weakened the standing and credibility of any other group of voters or community leaders to oppose the petition. Absecon’s lawyers have characterized the Absecon’s severance petition as being “uncontested”, indeed, as enjoying the unanimous support of the Pleasantville Board of Education and support for the severance. Pleasantville's decision to reverse its opposition has been interpreted as [acquiescence](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWKVLsQDEEc) and it means there will likely be no investigation and or scrutiny by the court. It also means that the previously prepared (and already paid for by the Pleasantville BOE) report and expert analysis ([included on the brief](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/civilcasejacket_pleasantville.pdf)) by Terry Crowley refuting Absecon’s arguments on behalf of the Pleasantville BOE and its students will not be considered and will have been a complete waste of money and time.
2. When Pleasantville dropped its opposition to the Absecon case it relinquished a powerful opportunity to use the arguments and proposed severance by Absecon to leverage action from the State Department of Education on behalf of the Pleasantville BOE and its students. The Absecon arguments bring into sharp relief the failure and complicity of the state in addressing the problems plaguing the School District of Pleasantville, as well as Absecon, including but not limited to the role of the two state monitors. Pleasantville’s renewed opposition would provide a new opportunity and a new legal (and political) front to make its case about the state’s involvement in its affairs. It will have leverage to say what it wants, doesn't want and needs from the state. As long as Absecon’s action is seen as an “uncontested petition”, the Pleasantville BOE will have no standing and will lose this leverage entirely.
3. New information in the form of documents submitted in April 2020 by the Absecon lawyers, since Pleasantville voted not to oppose the petition, are a reason to renew opposition and to answer their charges. Renewed support for opposing Absecon’s petition has gained new urgency and support in the community [among Pleasantville’s allies](https://buildingoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/attachments/further_comments_on_absecon_petition_051821_.pdf) due to the inflammatory charges, wrongful accusations, incendiary and slanderous allegations aimed at the administration, leadership, teachers, children and community of Pleasantville included in recent submissions to the Department of Education by the attorneys and consultants for Absecon. These charges need to be responded to, answered and refuted.

**Proposed Motion to Renew Opposition to Absecon’s Petition to Sever and Terminate the Send Receive Relationship between Absecon Public Schools and Pleasantville High School.**

1. We recognize that there has been an unexpected and high level of community interest and support for opposing the Absecon petition to sever the send-receive relationship with Pleasantville HS.

2. Renewed support for the opposing Absecon’s petition has gained new urgency and support due to the inflammatory charges, wrongful accusations, incendiary and slanderous allegations aimed at the administration, leadership, teachers, children and community of Pleasantville included in recent submissions to the Department of Education by the attorneys and consultants for Absecon.

3. Absecon’s arguments for secession bring into stark relief the serious questions about the role and complicity of the state and the state’s oversight and monitorship of Pleasantville and the need to bring these contradictions to the attention of the Commissioner of Education.

4. Absecon’s own behavior, rhetoric and language included in their recent arguments and the role and record of their attorneys and consultants across the state bolsters the importance of Absecon’s action as part of a broader issue impacting high poverty and racially segregated school districts across the state who are being blamed and penalized for conditions of beyond their control, namely poverty concentration and segregation.

5. For these reasons we renew our opposition to the Absecon’s petition to the Commissioner of Education seeking to terminate and dissolve the send-receive relationship between Absecon schools and Pleasantville High School and we further insist that the Commissioner of Education remand this case back to an Administrative Law Judge for a proper hearing and an evidentially record.