



African-American Community Roundtable

1000  
Columbia, Maryland

November 21, 2016

Howard County Council  
George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

RE: CR. 181 EBOC Study

Honorable Council Members

We, the members of the African-American Community Roundtable ("AACR"), support CR 181 EBOC study on the Equal Business Opportunity Program. In order for Howard County to continue to be an attractive place to live and work we must ensure that equal business opportunities and practices are available to all. The need for such a study is very timely and the AACR looks forward to partnering in any way necessary to provide support for such a study. Therefore, we encourage the council to pass this legislation and we will look forward to the results of this study being made public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Walker".

L.E. "Larry" Walker  
President

**Howard County Council  
2016 Legislative Session  
Resolution # 181 - 2016  
Monday, November 21, 2016  
Willie Flowers; Resident; Ellicott City, MD**

Council Chairman Ball and members of the Council. My name is Willie Flowers and I a resident of Ellicott City and I am happy to address the council on the subject of Resolution 181 and the details of Minority and Women Owned business and the Howard County government.

First, any discussion of expanding opportunities for minority and women owned businesses is good news. As the resolution details, there are many challenges. Therefore, I hope that this resolution will lead to greater developments in regard to attracting, not only established minority and women owned businesses, but also to inspire new startups that are yet to be realized. Obviously, there should be a method to market to these businesses wherever they are and a process should be created which builds opportunities for business ideas to be seeded, to flourish and grow. Whether the growth is from partnering subcontractor or prime contractor, the goal should be to assure access and to eliminate the appearance of the kind of resistance which has been the criticism of government contracting.

From the numbers presented, we all could take the opportunity to be saddened by the numbers and walk away that something should be done. The resolution lays that out very well. However, I think that we should positively look at the low percentages as starting points for growth moving forward. Starting points for minority business, women businesses and individuals with disabilities. The numbers should reinforce collaborations across the board to showcase the challenges can be resolved working together.

Such steps to change numbers cannot be made positive if we do not create a program that assures inclusion and diversity. Again, all hands need to be on deck to make this happen and all levels of community, business and government should be at the table to produce the best outcome. Because each sector benefits: the community through job creation, business through the opportunity to deliver a quality product and the government through service delivery.

If the Equal Business Opportunity program is the place that happens this is a

good start but all aspects of contracting should be reviewed for best practices, the aggressive nature of outreach and at all times the Howard County Government should celebrate contracts let and the total amount of procurement spending.

Simply put, what is resolved in 181 will build accountability and trust. If promoted publicly it will also inspire new entrepreneurs and that is good for everyone involved. In fact, amendments should be added to focus attention on startups for people with disabilities, women and minorities. But we should attract new businesses with a program in place. A program that reveals a clear process that will assure opportunities for them to participate in obtaining government contracts.



**Leonardo McClarty**

President/CEO, Howard County Chamber

November 21, 2016

Mr. Calvin Ball  
Chair, Howard County Council  
George Howard Building  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott, City, MD 21043

Dear Councilman Ball,

The Howard County Chamber of Commerce is a 700 member business organization whose mission is to provide advocacy, connections, and access to timely information to advance the growth and success of the business community. The Chamber's membership is comprised of a variety of firms including woman owned, minority, and veteran owned firms. Regardless of the size and ownership, each strives to grow their business in a profitable manner and hire local Howard County residents.

As we look to further support our members in their business development efforts and Howard County businesses in general, the Chamber is proud to extend our support for Council Resolution 181 which seeks to study procurement practices of the Equal Business Opportunity Program. We are excited about the opportunity to work with the Equal Business Opportunity Commission and others on this important initiative. It is important that all businesses, large and small, minority and women owned have the opportunity to compete for business derived from public dollars. Equally important is that those dollars are spent in an equitable manner.

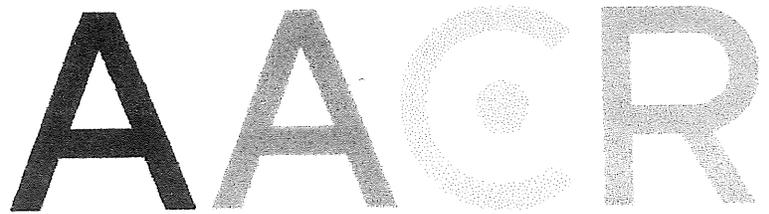
On behalf of the Howard County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, I thank you for the opportunity to participate in this review process and look forward to working with you and other members of the Council in the days ahead.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonardo McClarty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE  
President&CEO, Howard County Chamber of Commerce

CC: Howard County Council  
Howard County Board of Directors



AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE  
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ELICOTT CITY, MARYLAND 21043  
410-338-1111

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George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

RE: CR. 180 HRC on Hiring

Honorable Council Members

We, the members of the African-American Community Roundtable ("AACR"), are deeply concerned about the hiring practices of several Howard County Departments. Recent employment data reveals a disparity in the numbers of African American employees being hired and promoted in the County Fire and Rescue Services, Police, and Sheriff Departments and in the Public School System. Therefore, the African American Community Roundtable is in full support of CR. 180 HRC calling on the Human Rights Commission to study the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices of certain units of the Howard County Government.

If these statistics are indeed true, we feel that it is imperative the council encourage the implementation of a plan to correct the current practices in these agencies immediately. The residents of Howard County deserve and demand an employment system in our public agencies that is fair, impartial, and committed to inclusion of our diverse population.

Howard County is known throughout the country as a model of diversity. We are calling on you to pass this legislation so that a study and subsequent recommendations can be made to address employment disparities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Larry Walker".

L.E. "Larry" Walker  
President



Pravin Ponnuri  
In support of CR 180 & 181  
11/21/16

Good Evening.

My name is Pravin Ponnuri, and I am a Howard County resident, residing at 4616 Broken Lute Way, Ellicott City MD 21042.

I am here today to testify in support of County Council Resolution 180 & 181. I would like to thank County Councilman Dr Calvin Ball for showing his leadership in introducing these two resolutions.

County resolution 180 relates to the study of the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices within certain units of the Howard County government.

County Resolution 181 relates to reviewing the County's equal business opportunity program & purchasing practices with respect to businesses owned by women, minorities and individuals with disabilities to foster equal business opportunities.

According to the United States Bureau of Census about 45% of Howard County residents belong to the minority communities and 51% are women, but only 10% of the new hires over the past 24 months in the Howard County Police Department have been from the minority community. Only 20% of the management ranks are from the minority community, and only 14% of the teachers hired in the past 12 months are from the minority community.

We live in a fast changing world, and Howard County has changed over the past couple of decades. Let's work together to ensure that our workplaces represent the community we live in to ensure harmony in our communities.

The Equal Business opportunity commission was established to assist the efforts of the county in procuring goods and services from business that are owned by minorities, women and individuals with disabilities, but the efforts of this commission might have fallen short. Even though 34.4% of the business in Howard County are minority owned, only 13.7% of the contracts were awarded to them. Even though 51% of Howard County residents are women, only 11.6% of the contracts were awarded to women owned businesses. Even though 5.9% of the Howard County residents are disabled, only 0.08% of the contracts were awarded to individuals with disabilities.

These groups are not asking for a hand out, they are just asking for a level playing field, and maybe a helping hand to guide them through the process. County Resolution 180 & 181 are the first steps in the right direction for these efforts. I urge all members of the county council to support these resolutions.

Together we can bring about the change we deserve, and build the communities we all want to live in.

Thanks for your time and have a great day.