

Sayers, Margery

From: Angie Boyter <angie.boyter@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 16, 2020 10:17 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Testimony on CB60-2020
Attachments: Testimony on CB60, COA.docx

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I will be testifying on CB60-2020, which changes the responsibilities of the Commission on Aging. A copy of my testimony is attached and is also found below.

Testimony on CB60-2020

Despite some serious reservations, I think it makes sense to pass this bill. I believe strongly in the Howard County goals of openness and transparency, and I equally strongly dislike hypocrisy, a token commitment with no substance. If county regulations define a role for a commission, that role should be carried out.

I have been on the Commission on Aging for 5 years, and I can tell you that in my term (and according to other members of the COA, long before my term), rarely if ever have the responsibilities to give advice on the budget or new programs been carried out. The COA generally finds out about new programs when they are announced to the public. The same is true of the budget. We found out about this bill, CB60, after it had been submitted to the county council.

Except for a few boards like the Planning Board or the Board of Appeals, county boards and commissions have no decision-making authority but normally are supposed to provide advice to a department. I don't have to tell you how rich our county is in people with expertise they are willing to share for the good of our citizens. I am just a consumer representative on the COA, but we have professionals in geriatric nursing, nursing home administration, senior financial matters, real estate, and other relevant fields. Their advice is worth hearing, even if the department does not always want to take it completely.

The OAI staff wants good advice and over the next few months will be exploring with the COA how we can contribute input that helps them achieve their goals. I am optimistic about that initiative.

So it probably makes sense to pass this bill. No matter how the COA responsibilities are ultimately defined, however, I hope you will do your best to make sure they will be carried out.

If the county changes its definition of the role of the Commission on Aging, I recommend you also look at all of the 40-plus boards and commissions to ensure they are providing useful service to their county departments. From what I hear from others on both permanent and temporary boards, the COA experience is the norm. These boards consume resources that can be used elsewhere. If any boards and commissions are just placemarkers to "show we care", we should free up the human and financial resources and eliminate them.

Angie Boyter

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