

Introduced	01-05-2026
Public Hearing	01-20-2026
Council Action	02-02-2026
Executive Action	02-05-2026
Effective Date	04-07-2026

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 1

Bill No. 6 -2026

Introduced by: David Yungmann

SHORT TITLE: Howard County Ethics Commission – Members Service on Other Boards and Commissions – Prohibition

AN ACT prohibiting members of the Howard County Ethics Commission from serving on other Howard County Boards or Commissions or individuals in leadership roles on a political action committee or Super PAC registered in Maryland, while serving as a current member of the Howard County Ethics Commission; and generally relating to the Howard County Ethics Commission.

Introduced and read first time Jan 5, 2026. Ordered posted and hearing scheduled.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Having been posted and notice of time & place of hearing & title of Bill having been published according to Charter, the Bill was read for a second time at a public hearing on Jan 20, 2026.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

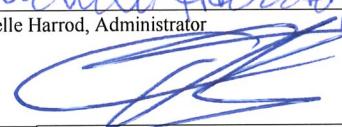
This Bill was read the third time on Feb 2, 2026 and Passed , Passed with amendments ✓, Failed .

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this 3 day of February, 2026 at 5th a.m./p.m.

By order Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Approved by the County Executive Feb 5, 2026


Calvin Ball, County Executive

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment.

Section 1. Be It Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:

By amending:

Title 22. "General Provisions"

Subtitle 2. "Howard County Public Ethics Law"

Section 22.203. "Administration"

Title 22 General Provisions

Subtitle 2. Howard County Public Ethics Law

Sec. 22.203. Administration.

- (a) There is a Howard County Ethics Commission that consists of five members, appointed by the County Executive with the concurrence of the County Council.
- (b) In addition to the qualifications set forth for board and commission members generally in title 6, subtitle 3 of this Code, members of the Ethics Commission shall not:
 - (1) Serve more than two consecutive terms;
 - (2) Hold or be a candidate for any elected or appointed Office of the United States, the State, any political subdivision or incorporated municipality of the State, or of any political party;
 - (3) Be an employee of the County or of any political party; ~~[[and]]~~
 - (4) Be otherwise required to file a lobbying registration pursuant to this subtitle ~~[[.]]~~; ~~AND~~
 - (5) SERVE ON ANY OTHER HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OR COMMISSION; ~~AND~~
 - (6) SERVE IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE ON A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) OR SUPER PAC REGISTERED IN MARYLAND.
- (c) (1) The Commission shall elect a chairman from among its members.
 - (2) The term of the chairman is one year.
 - (3) The chairman may be reelected.

1 (d) A majority vote of the Commission shall consist of three or more votes. A quorum consists
2 of three members present.

3 (e) (1) The County Solicitor shall assist the commission in carrying out the Commission's duties;
4 (2) If a conflict of interest under section 22.204 of this subtitle or other conflict prohibits
5 the County Solicitor from assisting the Commission in a matter, the County shall
6 provide sufficient funds for the Commission to hire independent counsel for the
7 duration of the conflict.

8 (f) The County Solicitor shall designate an Executive Secretary who shall attend all meetings.

9 (g) The Commission is the advisory body responsible for interpreting this subtitle and advising
10 persons subject to this subtitle regarding its application.

11 (h) The Commission shall hear and decide, with the advice of the County Solicitor or other
12 legal counsel if appropriate, all complaints filed regarding alleged violations of this subtitle
13 by any person.

14 (i) The Commission shall keep on file the minutes of its proceedings in accordance with State
15 of Maryland's Open Meetings Act. The Commission, or an office designated by the
16 Commission, shall retain as a public record all forms submitted by any person under this
17 subtitle for the longer of:

18 (1) Four years after receipt; or

19 (2) If the person is an elected official, the entirety of the person's term.

20 (j) The Commission shall conduct a public information and education program regarding the
21 purpose and implementation of this subtitle.

22 (k) On or before October 1 of each year, the Commission shall:

23 (1) Certify to the state ethics commission that the County is in compliance with the
24 requirements of the General Provisions Article, title 5, subtitle 8 of the Annotated Code
25 of Maryland for Elected Local Officials; and

26 (2) Submit to the local governing body a report on the administration of the Public Ethics
27 laws by the Commission in compliance with the requirements of the General
28 Provisions Article, title 5, subtitle 8 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

1 (l) The Commission shall:

2 (1) Determine if changes to this subtitle are required to be in compliance with the
3 requirements of the General Provisions Article, title 5, subtitle 8, of the Annotated
4 Code of Maryland; and
5 (2) Forward any recommended changes and amendments to the County Council for
6 enactment.

7 (l) The Commission shall:

8 (1) Determine if changes to this subtitle are required to be in compliance with the
9 requirements of the State Government Article, title 15, subtitle 8, of the Annotated
10 Code of Maryland; and
11 (2) Forward any recommended changes and amendments to the County Council for
12 enactment.

13 (m) (1) Any person subject to this subtitle may request an advisory opinion from the
14 Commission concerning the application of this subtitle.

15 (2) The Commission shall respond promptly to a request for an advisory opinion and shall
16 provide interpretations of this subtitle based on the facts provided or reasonably
17 available to the Commission within 60 days of the request.
18 (3) In accordance with all applicable State and County laws regarding public records, the
19 Commission shall publish or otherwise make available to the public copies of the
20 advisory opinions, with the identities of the subjects deleted.
21 (4) The Commission may adopt additional policies and procedures related to the advisory
22 opinion request process.

23 (n) (1) Any person may file a complaint with the Commission alleging a violation of any of the
24 provisions of this subtitle.

25 (2) A complaint shall be in writing and under oath; and
26 (3) The Commission may refer a complaint to the County Solicitor, or other legal counsel
27 if appropriate, for investigation and review.

1 (4) The Commission may reject without further proceedings any complaint which it deems
2 to be plainly frivolous or which, assuming the facts alleged were true, does not state a
3 violation of this subtitle.

4 (5) The Commission may dismiss a complaint if, after receiving an investigative report,
5 the Commission determines that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a
6 determination of a violation.

7 (6) If there is a reasonable basis for believing a violation has occurred, the subject of the
8 complaint shall be given an opportunity for a hearing conducted in accordance with the
9 applicable County Rules of Procedure.

10 (7) A final determination of a violation resulting from the hearing shall include findings of
11 fact and conclusions of law.

12 (8) Upon finding a violation, the Commission may take any enforcement action provided
13 for in section 22.208 of this subtitle.

14 (9) (i) After a complaint is filed and until a final finding of a violation by the Commission,
15 all actions regarding a complaint are confidential.
16 (ii) A finding of a violation is public information.

17 (10) The Commission may adopt additional policies and procedures related to complaints,
18 complaint hearings, the use of independent investigators and staff, the use of witness
19 and document subpoenas, and cure and settlement agreements.

20 (o) The Commission may grant exemptions to or modifications of the conflict of interest and
21 financial disclosure provisions of this subtitle to officials or employees serving as members
22 of County boards and commissions, when the Commission finds that the exemption or
23 modification would not be contrary to the purposes of this subtitle, and the application of
24 this subtitle would:
25 (1) Constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy; and
26 (2) Significantly reduce the availability of qualified persons for public service.

27 (p) The Commission may:

- (1) Assess a late fee of \$2.00 per day up to a maximum of \$250.00 for a failure to timely file a financial disclosure statement required under section 22.206 of this subtitle; and
- (2) Assess a late fee of \$10.00 per day up to a maximum of \$250.00 for a failure to file a timely lobbyist registration or lobbyist report required under section 22.207 of this subtitle.

(q) (1) The Executive Secretary or a designee, on behalf of the Commission, may issue subpoenas:

- (i) For the attendance of witnesses to testify; or
- (ii) To produce documents and other evidence relevant and necessary to the administration and enforcement of this subtitle.

(2) A subpoena shall be served by hand-delivering or mailing by certified mail a copy either to the person named or to an agent authorized by appointment or by law to receive service for the person named.

(3) A subpoena may be judicially enforced.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.

Amendment 1 to Council Bill No. 6 - 2026

BY: Christiana Rigby

Legislative Day 2

Date: February 2, 2026

Amendment No. 1

(This Amendment adds individuals in leadership roles in political action committees (PACs) or Super PACs registered in Maryland to the prohibition for members of the Howard County Ethics Commission)

- 1 On the title page, in line 2 of the title, after “Commissions” insert the following “or individuals in leadership roles on a political action committee or Super PAC registered in Maryland,”
- 2 in leadership roles on a political action committee or Super PAC registered in Maryland,”
- 3 On page 1, in line 21, strike “AND”
- 4 On page 1, in line 22, strike the “period” and substitute “; AND”
- 5 On page 1, immediately after line 22, insert the following:
- 6 “(6) SERVE IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE ON A POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC) OR SUPER PAC REGISTERED IN MARYLAND.”

I certify that this a true copy of
Am 1 to CBL 6 - 2026
passed on Feb 2, 2026
Michele Harrell
Council Administrator

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Introduced and read first time _____, 2026. Ordered posted and hearing scheduled.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Having been posted and notice of time & place of hearing & title of Bill having been published according to Charter, the Bill was read for a second time at a public hearing on _____, 2026.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Bill was read the third time on _____, 2026 and Passed __, Passed with amendments __, Failed __.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this _____ day of _____, 2026 at __ a.m./p.m.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Approved by the County Executive _____, 2026

Calvin Ball, County Executive

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17 (2) Hold or be a candidate for any elected or appointed Office of the United States, the
18 State, any political subdivision or incorporated municipality of the State, or of any
19 political party;

20 (3) Be an employee of the County or of any political party; **[[and]]**

21 (4) Be otherwise required to file a lobbying registration pursuant to this subtitle**[[.]]**; AND

22 (5) SERVE ON ANY OTHER HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OR COMMISSION.

23 (c) (1) The Commission shall elect a chairman from among its members.

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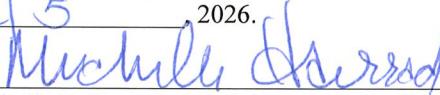
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- (i) For the attendance of witnesses to testify; or
- (ii) To produce documents and other evidence relevant and necessary to the administration and enforcement of this subtitle.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council, stands enacted on
February 5, 2026.



Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been passed by the yeas and nays of two-thirds of the members of the Council notwithstanding the objections of the Executive, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having received neither the approval nor the disapproval of the Executive within ten days of its presentation, stands enacted on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, not having been considered on final reading within the time required by Charter, stands failed for want of consideration on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, having been disapproved by the Executive and having failed on passage upon consideration by the Council stands failed on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

BY THE COUNCIL

This Bill, the withdrawal of which received a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council, is withdrawn from further consideration on _____, 2026.

Michelle R. Harrod, Administrator to the County Council