
From: Facchine, Felix
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 5:19 PM
To: Jones, Opel; Rigby, Christiana; Walsh, Elizabeth; Jung, Debra; Yungmann, David; Harrod, Michelle; Wimberly, Theodore; Respass, Charity
Cc: Ball, Calvin; Ganz, Brandee; Sager, Jennifer
Subject: Notice of Request to Not Introduce Legislation
Attachments: CoEx Letter - Class and Comp Legislation.pdf

Good evening, Chair Jones and Members of Council:

The Administration requests that the following pre-filed legislation **not** be introduced at tonight's legislative session:

- CB54-2026
- CB55-2026
- CB56-2026
- CB57-2026
- CR126-2026

Additionally, we have attached correspondence from the County Executive regarding the compensation and classification plan updates.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Felix

Felix Facchine
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HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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September 8, 2026

Good afternoon, Chair Jones and Members of the County Council:

Howard County is known across our nation and world for having the best quality of life for our residents. This is due, in part, to efforts of the nearly 5,000 Howard County Government employees who are dedicated to provide the best services to our community.

In December of 2021, we began undertaking a comprehensive review of our classification and compensation systems across the general scale and AFSCME (1810 and 3888) unions within Howard County Government. This was an effort designed to ensure that our workforce is appropriately recognized, our compensation practices are equitable and competitive, and our County remains well positioned to recruit and retain talented professionals who deliver essential services to our community. During the initial review of our job classifications, it was noted that many were antiquated and did not reflect relevant experience, and some required outdated or irrelevant certifications. During this process, the County worked with a consultant to ensure the requirements, certifications, education and/or relevant experience required for positions were accurately reflected.

This Classification and Compensation Study reflects the first comprehensive study of its kind in Howard County since 1996, three decades ago. It represents not only a milestone, but also a commitment to ensuring that our County has a modern, competitive, and fair compensation system that reflects both the needs of our workforce and the expectations of our residents.

This study involved a comprehensive effort, reviewing hundreds of separate position classification categories, compensation structures, decades-old compensation processes, and thousands of affected positions. The study ensures that job titles across county government are correctly categorized and that employee compensation is fair internally and competitive externally.

During this process, the County partnered with an external public-sector consultant from fall of 2022 through earlier this year. During this timeframe, the County undertook the following actions:

- In December of 2021 and early 2022, the Office of Human Resources reached out to departments to gather data and begin an assessment of current work being performed.
- In fall of 2022, the consultant was awarded the contract and started information gathering of our job classifications, compensation system and policies.
- In January 2023, the consultant noted Howard County was approximately 12-15% behind market, with some positions being 25 to 30% behind market. The study helped us to improve our competitiveness with the relevant surrounding market, so we are better positioned to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce.

At the onset of the study in 2021, we also understood the importance of stakeholder input and consultant-validated research, taking the following steps:

- Throughout the length of the study, extensive work sessions took place with Directors and Administrators to understand operational challenges and needs (2022-2026).
- Throughout 2022 and 2023, more than 30 informational sessions were held with employees to communicate the goals of the study and provide an opportunity for general observations.



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- Starting in spring of 2023, we implemented benchmarking reviews against the regional labor market—a best practice in every strong public-sector classification and compensation study. Because Howard County competes directly with neighboring counties, municipalities, and, in many cases, even state and federal agencies for top talent, it was essential that our compensation policies remain aligned with the region. This benchmarking process examined salary ranges, pay structures, and compensation policies across peer jurisdictions (Montgomery, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Baltimore County, Baltimore City; Harford County was excluded, as it was an outlier in compensation), as well as WSSC Water, where we often compete for talent.

Knowing that undertaking this substantial effort would require a multi-phase process, we have already implemented a number of historic and critical steps to address the goals of the study:

- Starting in 2023, we implemented pay-equity reviews for all new hires to ensure pay considers the relevant qualifications of individuals as compared with their peers holding the same position.
- In January of 2024, we extended the pay range for a number of pay scales. This change expanded opportunities for employees to grow within their classification, allowing salaries to remain competitive over longer careers.
- Also, in January of 2024, we amended eligibility for performance-based increments, so employees are now considered for step increases every year. Annual eligibility strengthens our ability to motivate and retain top talent, reduces frustration among mid-career employees, and provides a fairer and more predictable system that reflects the value of ongoing dedication and performance excellence. Previously, employees who reached the midpoint of their pay grade had to wait two years before becoming eligible again. This change was very meaningful—not only because it allowed us to recognize and reward employees for their performance and contributions more consistently, but also because it ensures our pay policies align with best practices in the public and private sectors.
- In December of 2024, the County also implemented new policies to address salary equity concerns identified for internal pay-equity for existing positions.
- During Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, we implemented historic Cost-of-Living Adjustments, averaging up to 12.5%. These adjustments represented one of the most significant pay actions in County history. They not only helped employees better manage inflationary pressures but also moved Howard County much closer to parity with the regional market—a critical step to ensure that we can continue to attract and retain the very best talent.

Each of these steps were taken to ensure that our workforce did not fall behind while we worked towards more comprehensive solutions.

Today, I can say with confidence that Howard County continues to lead and now stands out as one of the most competitive local governments in the region when it comes to compensation. This is the result of years of careful planning, hard work, collaboration, and a deep commitment to valuing the people who serve our community every single day.

Reaching this point has required an extraordinary level of collaboration, analysis, and dedication. I want to recognize and sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to this effort, particularly the Office of Human Resources, Finance, Budget, Law, County Council, and our unions.



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As you know, we recently filed CB54-2026, CB55-2026, CB56-2026, and CB57-2026, representing the final legislative phase of this important work from the last five years, to adopt a new classification plan for Howard County Government. In an effort to ensure fiscal responsibility, we worked with the Budget Office to determine a balanced approach for implementation. The fiscal impact for implementation is estimated at approximately \$668,000 per year in the operating budget, and a one-time bonus of \$628,000 for eligible employees. For a January 2027 implementation, we estimated that \$334,000 would be paid out of the general fund, and \$628,000 (one-time expense) would be paid out of non-departmental funds. In total, the fiscal impact of implementation was estimated and budgeted to be approximately \$962,000, which was budgeted for in Fiscal Year 2027.

Building upon the many efforts we have already implemented, the Classification and Compensation Study changes are ready to be finalized. **However, to allow everyone to have meaningful input and a full understanding of the study and its impact, we will be requesting that the County Council not introduce this legislation and hand this work over to the incoming Administration and County Council to allow them the flexibility to make the final decisions on this significant update to the classification plan.** As we prepare for transition in November, we will work closely with the incoming Administration to evaluate and implement additional recommendations resulting from the analysis.

This classification and compensation study is historic, but it is also just one step in our ongoing journey. We will continue to assess, benchmark, and ensure fairness in our systems so that Howard County remains a model of excellence in public service. When we invest in our employees, we invest in better services, greater efficiency, and a stronger community for the residents of Howard County.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this important work and, most importantly, to the employees who dedicate themselves every day to serving the people of Howard County.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball, EdD
Howard County Executive