
From: Nicole Beulah <nicole.beulah@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 5, 2026 3:41 PM
To: CouncilDistrict2@howardcountymd.gov; InspectorGeneral; County Council
Subject: Concerns over Proposed Changes and Requested Clarification

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Dear Council Member,

I do not normally write regarding legislative matters, but I feel compelled to do so at this time. I was surprised by the sheer volume of legislation filed during the Council's last session, and among those items, I was particularly concerned by the significant package addressing classification and compensation.

As I understand it, this legislation would make substantial changes to the County's class and pay plans, County Code, and employee manual. While I recognize that updates to these systems may be necessary, I am particularly concerned about provisions that appear to shift authority and increase compensation at the highest levels of the organization—particularly for individuals who appear to have been involved in drafting or developing the legislation.

The associated memorandum repeatedly references "the study," yet I have been unable to locate the study itself or its exhibits among the materials provided. If the study is being used to justify these significant changes, shouldn't the underlying study and supporting exhibits be readily available as part of the public record? This seems especially important when some of the proposed changes could directly benefit the individuals or office responsible for developing the recommendations.

I would appreciate clarification on the following issues:

1. Transfer of Authority Over New-Hire Salaries

The legislation appears to shift authority from the County Executive and Chief Administrative Officer to the newly created Chief Human Resources Officer, formerly the Human Resources Administrator, regarding authorization of new-hire salaries.

- Is this legislation and the associated study being prepared by the current Human Resources Administrator?
- If so, what safeguards are in place to ensure that the individual or office responsible for developing the recommendations is not also given expanded authority to approve their implementation?
- Why is this authority being shifted, and what independent oversight will remain?

2. Salary Equity Reviews

On page 9 of the testimony, the legislation discusses changes to the Salary Equity Review process. I understand that this process currently occurs within Human Resources.

My concern is the potential lack of independent review. If the Chief Human Resources Officer is responsible for reviewing and approving hires up to the midpoint of the salary range, the same office would effectively be reviewing and approving its own determinations. The process would therefore lack a meaningful second level of authentication until an employee is being hired at the highest portion of the salary range.

- What independent checks and balances will exist under the proposed process?
- Who will review the fiscal implications of salary determinations?
- What safeguards will ensure fiscal responsibility and consistency across departments?

3. Rulemaking Authority and the Appeals Process

Page 15 of the testimony addresses “Rulemaking Authority.” The legislation appears to provide that, when an employee is reclassified into a different position, the employee may appeal to the Office of Human Resources.

The testimony further states that the Office of Human Resources requires authority to issue regulations establishing an appeals process and appropriate remedies.

This raises a significant governance concern: **If the Office of Human Resources is involved in developing the legislation, will subsequently administer the reclassification process, and is then granted authority to establish the rules governing appeals of that process, where is the independent oversight?**

In other words, would the same office effectively be involved in writing the legislation, implementing it, establishing the appeal rules, and administering the appeals process?

I would appreciate clarification regarding what independent review or oversight would exist.

4. Separation of the General and Executive Salary Scales

Page 7 of the testimony discusses separating the General Scale from the “Executive Scale.” The testimony indicates that this structure would allow the County to apply lower COLA adjustments to the Executive Scale while potentially providing higher increases to the General Scale.

However, when comparing the actual salary schedules contained throughout the various documents, the proposed Executive Scale appears to provide substantially greater increases than the General Scale in a number of instances.

This is particularly concerning when looking at the position currently held by the Human Resources Administrator. Based on my review of the existing and proposed salary schedules, the new Chief Human Resources Officer classification appears to have a salary range that is at least \$68,000 higher than the previous Human Resources Administrator scale.

- What objective criteria were used to establish the Executive Scale?
- What analysis supports the proposed compensation levels?
- Was an independent compensation study conducted?
- If so, why has the study and its exhibits not been included with the legislation?

5. Fiscal Analysis

I also have serious questions regarding the fiscal analysis presented on page 16 of the testimony.

For legislation exceeding 400 pages and making significant changes to compensation structures, classification, authority, and personnel processes, the fiscal impact appears to be addressed in only four relatively broad bullet points.

Specifically:

- How was the stated \$668,000 full-year fiscal impact calculated?
- Does that figure come directly from the referenced study?
- Does the fiscal analysis account for the long-term financial impact of the proposed salary scales, reclassifications, salary equity adjustments, and expanded executive compensation?
- How were potential downstream costs to the County calculated?
- Why is a new full-time position included in the study and associated cost analysis outside of the County's normal budget process?

The last point is particularly concerning. If the department responsible for developing the legislation has also included a new full-time position in the underlying study and fiscal analysis, I believe the Council should carefully examine whether that position should instead be subject to the normal budget and personnel approval process.

I fully understand that compensation and classification systems may need to be modernized, and I am not opposed to responsible efforts to address legitimate inequities or administrative concerns. My concern is with the process, transparency, concentration of authority, independent oversight, and the potential financial impact of the proposed changes.

Before the Council takes action on legislation of this scope, I believe Council Members and the public should have access to the underlying study, all exhibits and supporting analyses, the methodology used to establish the proposed salary ranges, and a detailed explanation of the fiscal impact.

I appreciate your time and consideration. I hope these questions and concerns will be addressed during the public meeting and that the Council will carefully consider the transparency and safeguards surrounding this legislation before taking action.

Thank you,

Nicole Beaulah

From: JEFF BEAULAH <jbeulah@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2026 9:34 AM
To: CouncilDistrict2@howardcountymd.gov; InspectorGeneral; County Council
Subject: CB54 and 55

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Dear Council Member,

I am writing regarding the timing of CB54 and CB55 and the decision to advance legislation of this magnitude during the final Council sessions of the current administration.

The timing of these bills is concerning to me independent of the substantive changes they propose. CB54 and CB55 appear to make sweeping changes to the County's classification and compensation systems, including changes to the Class Plan, Pay Plan, County Code, Employee Manual, personnel authority, and executive compensation.

Given the scope of these changes, I question why they are being introduced and advanced at this particular point in the administration.

I understand that legislation may be introduced at any time permitted under the County's rules. My concern is whether legislation of this magnitude should be rushed through during the final sessions of an administration when there will soon be a transition in County leadership.

The Timing of the Legislation

CB54 and CB55 do not appear to address a time-sensitive emergency. They represent structural changes to how the County classifies positions, determines compensation, exercises personnel authority, and handles certain employee appeals.

These are decisions that could affect future administrations for years to come.

That raises several questions:

- Why must these changes be enacted before the current administration leaves office?
- What prevents the incoming administration from reviewing the proposed changes and determining whether they should be implemented?
- Has the incoming administration been consulted regarding these proposed changes?
- Has the County Executive-elect, if applicable, been provided the complete study and supporting documentation?
- Why is the Council being asked to consider such significant changes during the final sessions rather than allowing the incoming administration an opportunity to evaluate them?

I am particularly concerned because the legislation appears to create or substantially modify positions, salary structures, and authorities that will continue well beyond the current administration.

Personnel Board Review

I also believe the timing of the Personnel Board's review deserves particular scrutiny.

Section 706 of the County Code appears to contemplate a process in which proposed classification plan changes are submitted to the Personnel Board for approval and to the Council for legislative action.

If CB54 and CB55 were filed with the Council before the Personnel Board completed its review and approval, I would like to understand why the Council is being asked to consider legislation before that process is complete.

Was the Personnel Board given an opportunity to fully review the proposed changes before the bills were filed?

If not, why was the legislation filed before that review occurred?

And if the Personnel Board has not yet voted on the proposed changes, what exactly is the Council being asked to approve?

These questions seem particularly important given that the Council is approaching the end of the current administration's term.

Avoiding a “Done Deal” Before Public Review

There is also a practical concern with the timing.

Once legislation has been formally filed and presented to the Council, there can be significant pressure to move it forward simply because it is already before the body.

I would hope that CB54 and CB55 will not be treated as a completed policy decision simply because the legislation has been introduced.

The public should have adequate time to review the proposed changes, understand the underlying study, evaluate the fiscal implications, and determine how the proposed changes will affect County employees and taxpayers.

That is especially important when the underlying Evergreen Solutions study appears to be repeatedly cited as justification, yet the complete study and its exhibits do not appear to have been made available with the legislation.

The proposed changes are not limited to the current administration and could be long reaching in their affect on Howard County Government, it's employees and also its residents.

Thank your time, I hope you consider the long term ramifications of a rushed process.

Jeff Beaulah