

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative day # 11

RESOLUTION NO. 133 - 2026

Introduced by: Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

Short Title: Appointment – Erika Cole– Interfaith Advisory Commission

Title: A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Erika Cole to the Interfaith Advisory Commission.

Introduced and read first time on Sep 8, 2026.

By order

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

Read for a second time and a public hearing held on Sep 22, 2026.

By order

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted ☒, Adopted with amendments___, Failed___, Withdrawn ___ by the County Council on Oct 5, 2026.

Certified by

Michelle Harrod
Michelle Harrod, Administrator to the County Council

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

WHEREAS, Section 404 of the Howard County Charter and Section 6.300 of the Howard County Code provide for the County Executive to appoint and for the County Council to confirm nominees to Howard County Boards and Commissions created by law; and

WHEREAS, Sections 6.352 and 12.222 of the Howard County Code provide for an Interfaith Advisory Commission in Howard County; and

WHEREAS, the County Executive has proposed the appointment of Erika Cole as a member of the Interfaith Advisory Commission; and

WHEREAS, the County Council ratifies the County Executive's special trust and confidence in the abilities of the nominee.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland this 5 day of October, 2026 that the following person is appointed as a member of the Interfaith Advisory Commission to serve from the passage of this Resolution to October 5, 2028 or until a successor is appointed and confirmed:

Erika Cole
Columbia, Maryland

Erika E. Cole, Esq.

THE CHURCH ATTORNEY®

Professional Summary

Accomplished attorney & CEO who has built significant business and contacts in the faith-based and nonprofit arena, developed over 25+ years by listening to client needs, developing a strategy to solve problems, clearly communicating the successful path forward, and serving with joy.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Cole Law Offices, LLC | March 2022 - Present Managing Partner/Chief Executive Officer

Founder and operator of a full-service law firm concentrating in the representation of denominations, churches, and other tax-exempt clients; Founder of the Faithful Foundations Membership, a program designed to provide accessible legal education to churches and their leadership teams; serves as General Counsel to national and international denominations; provides training to churches and organizations in risk management and critical governance areas; manages all aspects of the law firm practice and staffing.

Whiteford, Taylor & Preston | July 2017 -February 2022 Equity Partner

Served as outside General Counsel to churches, nonprofits and faith-based organizations in a broad range of corporate transactions with national and international presence; effective communicator advising church leaders and the Board of Directors on strategic legal and corporate direction; increased value to clients by resolving compliance, HR, and regulatory issues; compiled the right team of professionals for complex projects, leveraging my excellent relationships with other professionals.

Co-Chair Mentoring Program for associates in the Columbia/Rockville/DC offices;
Served on Firm's Ethics Committee
Created Mentor-Protégé Program for attorneys in the BIPOC community and to be of service in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion matters

The Law Offices of Erika E. Cole, LLC | June 2005 - July 2017 Principal

Founded and operated a full-service law firm concentrating in the representation of non-profit and tax-exempt clients; founder of The Church Compliance Conference, designed to inform and inspire pastors and leaders in areas of legal compliance; served as General Counsel to national and international denominations; provide training to churches and organizations in risk management and critical governance areas; manage all aspects of the law firm including other attorneys and staff; author of *The Church Attorney's Guide* series.

Ferguson, Schetelich, & Ballew, P.A. | September 2000 - May 2005 Associate

Provided comprehensive legal services to small- and medium-size businesses, including matters of business structure and management, tax planning, private stock offerings, and business acquisitions and sales; represent charitable, religious and tax-exempt organizations; co-authored Maryland Law of Religious Corporations.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore MD | August 2001 - May 2005
Adjunct Professor

Taught Legal Analysis, Research, and Writing, a required first-year course designed to train students in persuasive legal writing and appellate oral advocacy.

Loyola College of Maryland, Baltimore MD | May 1998 - May 2001
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Law

Taught GB 612: Legal and Regulatory Issues in Business, core course in the MBA Program that included contracts, business torts, and labor & employment law; Taught BA 305: Legal Environment of Business; facilitated Mock Trial with student participation.

EDUCATION

University of Baltimore School of Law, Baltimore MD | May 1996
Juris Doctor
Admitted: Maryland Bar

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA | May 1993
Bachelor of Science in Political Science with a minor in Communications

MEDIA RECOGNITION AND SERVICE

Keynote Speaker at the Ultimate Financial & Legal Summit, October 2025, Virtual
“Top 5 Hidden Legal Risks in Ministry & How to Prevent Them

Keynote Speaker at The Church Network Conference, July 2025, Omaha, Nebraska
Keynote: “Law & Leadership: The Keys to Protecting Your Ministry”

Keynote Speaker at the MORE Conference, March 2025, Ocala, Florida
“Top 5 Hidden Legal Risks Churches Face & How to Fix Them”

Co-Organizer of the Rest & Renew Cruise, January 2025, Bahamas

Founder and Producer of The Church Law Podcast, 2022 - Present

Baltimore Business Journal - Who’s Who in Law, 2021

The Daily Record “The Church Attorney Joins Whiteford Taylor’s Flock”, July 2017

Baltimore Business Journal- “How I Became The Church Attorney”, August, 2017

Editorial Advisory Board for Church Law & Tax, 2016 to present

Appointed to the Panel of Legal Experts for the Commission of Accountability for Religious Organizations (2011)

Author: The Church Attorney’s Guide series