

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative day # 11

RESOLUTION NO. 139 - 2026

Introduced by: Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

Short Title: Appointment – Jodi Grossblatt Saunders– Interfaith Advisory Commission

Title: A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Jodi Grossblatt Saunders 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This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted ✓, Adopted with amendments___, Failed___, Withdrawn ___ by the County Council on Oct 5, 2026.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 Jodi Grossblatt Saunders 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:

Jodi Grossblatt Saunders
Columbia, Maryland

JODI GROSSBLATT SAUNDERS

EXPERIENCE

THE ANSWER CLASS, Columbia, MD

Co-Founder and President, 2004-current

- Oversee all operations of regional, community-focused test prep and college admissions support business serving more than 10K students
- Administer all aspects of relationship-building with 30 Maryland high school partners
- Donated \$275+ to partner high schools
- Manage and mentor 30+ teachers, tutors, and mentors
- Manage small marketing team to promote the importance of affordable college preparation
- Grow business from creation to serving over 950 students per year

HOWARD COUNTY TEEN INTERFAITH INITIATIVE, Columbia, MD

Founder, 2016-2021

- Founded youth-led teen interfaith group, bringing together 9th-12th grade students from various faith backgrounds to learn about one another as individuals and as members of a faith community, to engage in community service initiatives, and to develop leadership skills.
- Coordinated monthly programs with youth and youth leaders from Beth Shalom Congregation, Dar al-Taqwa, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia (UUCU), and St. John Baptist Church. PATH also provided organizing expertise, helping teens learn how to work in a diverse community to achieve a shared goal.
- Teens visited each other's faith institutions, learning about the host's customs and traditions, and shared food together, including an Iftar meal and a Shabbat dinner.
- Each year, teens selected which community issues they wanted to address as an interfaith teen group. Activities included a food drive for Grassroots, participating as a "team" for the Howard County Suicide Prevention Walk, and providing oral testimony to the Howard County BOE about the importance of mental health supports in the public schools.

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, College Park, MD

Graduate Teaching Assistant 1996-2000

- Solo taught two sections of undergraduate speech communication courses each semester of Master's program
- Received high scores on student evaluations
- Taught upper-level communication courses based on teaching performance in introductory-level courses
- Received UMD Excellence in Teaching Award

NYC & DC NON-PROFIT WORK

Communication & Grantwriting Assistant & Researcher, 1994-2000

- Researched potential grant opportunities for Stand for Children, a growing non-profit. Added to grant proposals to ensure funding for child safety and growth initiatives.
- Conducted interviews, analyzed data, and presented findings to Washington Waldorf School Board to understand parent dissatisfaction.
- Served as Communications Associate and Grant Assistant at Ms. Foundation for Women. Managed famed Take Our Daughters to Work Day program for over 1,000 schools and organizations. Supported the development of communication materials for the nationwide project.

ADDITIONAL VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS, Columbia, MD, Past Howard County Interfaith Dialogue Leader

BETH SHALOM CONGREGATION, Columbia, MD, Past Religious School Board President, General Volunteer

JEWISH FEDERATION OF HOWARD COUNTY, Columbia, MD, Past Bet Yeladim Liaison to JFHC Board

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, School of Communication, College Park, MD

M.S. in Speech Communication + PhD coursework

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY, Evanston, IL

B.S., Communication Studies, Summa Cum Laude