October 19, 2026

Good evening, Chairperson Jones and members of the County Council. My name is Allan Kittleman, and I reside in West Friendship. I am here tonight to strongly urge your support for Council Bill 69-2026.

When this Council established the independent Office of Inspector General, it sent a clear message to the residents of Howard County: we value transparency, accountability, and the responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. However, an independent watchdog cannot perform its job effectively if it is denied access to the very records required to conduct thorough investigations.

Currently, our Inspector General is forced to navigate an inefficient, piecemeal system to request public records—often having to go directly through the individual departments that are the subject of scrutiny. Treating an internal investigator like an ordinary resident submitting a public information request slows down oversight, wastes administrative time, and creates an inherent conflict of interest.

Council Bill 69-2026 fixes this operational bottleneck by explicitly designating the Inspector General as a custodian of county government public records. This is not about expanding power; it is about providing the standard tools necessary to perform independent oversight. To effectively root out waste, fraud, and abuse, our Inspector General needs direct and unrestricted access to personnel and operational files without having to fight administrative hurdles for every single document.

Independent watchdogs across Maryland have warned that restricted record access directly hampers their investigations. We have seen similar access battles disrupt oversight in neighboring jurisdictions. Howard County can bypass those unnecessary court battles and proactively secure a transparent system.

Supporting CB69-2026 ensures that the Office of Inspector General functions exactly as it was intended to—fully independent, efficient, and capable of safeguarding public trust. Thank you for your time and your commitment to government transparency.

I urge a favorable vote on this critical piece of legislation.

Allan Kittleman
3030 Kittleman Lane
West Friendship, MD 21794

APPROVE CB 69-2026:

Maryland's Public Information Act (PIA) provides broad public access to government records while protecting privacy and other legitimate governmental interests. It also requires each governmental unit, including a county, to designate a records custodian responsible for public access. Maryland IGs, supported by the MDDC Press Association, are asking the General Assembly to amend the MPIA to create a specific exemption for local IGs, allowing them to obtain any record they need to perform duties, even if it is otherwise exempt from public disclosure.

Public access under the PIA and official access for investigative work are not the same. The county IG is considered a county official with oversight and investigative duties. If the IG's role includes reviewing records for audits, investigations, or compliance, they would have the same legal right to access public records as any other authorized records custodian or designated official, subject to PIA rules. The IG may also be permitted to review nonpublic records relevant to official duties when authorized by county law or policy and when applicable legal safeguards are observed.

The county can provide appropriate access through public-facing portals, secure staff accounts, or internal records systems. Access should be:

- Authorized according to the IG's official responsibilities.
- Limited to records needed for legitimate county work.
- Protected by secure credentials and appropriate clearances.
- Logged and reviewed to promote accountability.
- Subject to privacy, confidentiality, privilege, and other legal restrictions

These safeguards would allow the IG to obtain necessary information efficiently without creating unrestricted access to protected material.

In my work with several federal agencies and their inspectors general, investigators were given access to records required for their assigned duties. When classified information was involved, access depended on the investigator holding the appropriate security clearance. Although county and federal authorities differ, this experience demonstrates that meaningful oversight can coexist with strong access controls.

Howard County should establish a clear policy granting the IG timely, role-based access to records necessary for authorized work. The policy should define the scope of access, identify the responsible records custodians, provide secure credentials, and require appropriate auditing and confidentiality protection.

Howard County should provide its Inspector General (IG) timely secure access to county records needed for authorized audits, investigations, and compliance reviews.

Angela Bruce

Dan Waters Testimony for CB69-2026 October 19, 2026, Legislative Public Hearing

I testified regarding the establishment of the OIG at the public hearing on November 18, 2024, and expressed a concern that the OIG would be limited in scope and authority to protect certain personnel regardless of their offence or activities and expenditures regardless of their value. I did not anticipate that a subsequent request for full access to sensitive information would lead to a WMAR-2 News report about racism. Anyone leveling those charges should [redacted] provide specific, unambiguous examples including any details about the sudden onset or historical accounts of such behaviors. Otherwise, it appears like slander, which is the same tactic used to cover up fraud in Minneapolis. Employees and OIGs of nearby Federal Agencies have access to very sensitive information. Federal OIG's operate under the Inspector General Act of 1978 (as amended) and Inspector General Empowerment Act of 2016 which grant broad authority to access all records. If they violate that trust, they are held accountable and face the consequences. Our OIG should be no different. Furthermore, if the impact of our OIG's investigations affects any [redacted] group, then the OIG needs to understand that disparate impacts, in themselves, do not prove racism or bias. In the event there are disparate impacts, the OIG should have enough courage and integrity not to lower standards and succumb to the slander that will come.

I renew my advocacy for the OIG to publish a public website that proudly shows their work and demonstrates they are acting in accordance with what the residents voted on in 2024. This website should disclose, to the greatest extent possible:

- OIG Operating costs
- Summary information on the OIGs effort to proactively identify and investigate efficiencies
- OIG recommendations to the County Council and Executive including their status
- Outcomes, and consequences of all resolved OIG investigations
- Costs of fraud and waste
- Without disclosing specific names, for resolved finding of:
    - Fraud - the status of any criminal charges, penalties, fines, or recovery of funds
    - Waste - how the waste was stopped and whether action was taken to remove or discipline the person responsible
    - Abuse - the employment status of the person found responsible
- Summary information on investigations underway but not resolved

That November public hearing was somewhat jubilant. The Council now has an opportunity to show that this jubilation does not amount to virtue signaling as was done earlier this year in February's public hearing. The Council can also show that it is not just a rubber stamp for the County executive. The resolution should pass, unanimously.

I also ask the OIG, if it has not already done so, to review the question on the 2024 ballot. The mandate expressed in that question should guide its work and serve as the basis for an unwavering mission statement.

Dan Waters
Ellicott City, Maryland

Testimony in Support of CB69-2026
Howard County Council — October 19, 2026

Chair Jones and members of the Council:

My name is Kathleen Sedney. I serve on the inaugural Howard County IG Advisory Board, but I am speaking today in my personal capacity as a Howard County resident, not on behalf of the Board.

I am here to express my strong support for CB69-2026.

I have spent the majority of my career in government oversight, serving in roles supporting IGs at several Cabinet-level Federal agencies.

Just about two years ago, I was thrilled that Howard County residents overwhelmingly voted to establish an IG for our county government. A few months later, in January 2025, I jumped at the chance to give back by being a member of the IG Advisory Board. At that time, it felt like Federal government oversight was under attack, particularly when my boss, the IG of the Department of the Interior, was fired without cause while I was serving as his Chief of Staff. Today, I am deeply troubled to see what I believe is a similar threat to effective oversight at the state and local levels—even here in Howard County.

The problem is straightforward: an IG cannot effectively investigate what she cannot see.

The MPIA serves an important purpose: ensuring transparency by providing the public access to government records, subject to legal exceptions. But applying its mandatory nondisclosure provisions to an IG in the same manner as a member of the public can prevent the IG from accessing records essential to performing investigations.

In Howard County, there are DOZENS of types of records that the IG is currently unable to access. Here are some examples: personnel files, retirement records, licensing records, financial information, and surveillance images.

These are not incidental documents. They can be critical evidence when investigating allegations of fraud, waste, or abuse. Without access, the IG is not able to determine whether a complaint has merit, follow the evidence, or reach a meaningful conclusion.

This is not a hypothetical concern. At our most recent Advisory Board meeting, IG Madigan reported that she had been unable to fully investigate several hotline complaints because she could not obtain the records she needed.

Think about what that means for Howard County residents. We have established an IG's Office, committed nearly $1 million in public funds to support it, and asked it to provide independent oversight. Yet the office cannot fully carry out that responsibility.

This is not about giving the IG unrestricted authority to make confidential information public. It is about ensuring that the IG can access the information needed to perform legitimate oversight while continuing to protect records that are legally confidential.

I have worked in the federal IG community since 2011 and performed or overseen investigations for over two decades. I can tell you that access to relevant records is fundamental to credible, independent oversight. It is not a luxury or an administrative convenience. It is a prerequisite for doing the job.

Howard County residents voted for an IG because they wanted meaningful accountability in their government. We owe it to them to ensure that the office has the tools and access necessary to deliver on that promise.

I urge the Council to support CB69-2026. Thank you for your time and consideration.

NATER for HoCo Exec!

Testimonial to the Howard County Council on SUPPORT for CB69-2026;
Let's just let the OIG do its job
Opel Jones, Chair
October 19, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm Nater Kane, the County Executive candidate who isn't concerned about what an OIG investigation might find.

Aren't we tired of being embarrassed by issues like this?

The OIG's role is crucial to accountable government. As public trust in all levels of government is at a generational low, we must ensure the OIG has the tools and legal authority for discreet access to the records it needs to do its job. That also means establishing formal custodian status with this bill, because the OIG is part of county government, and its duties require both autonomy and discretion.

We have recordkeeping laws intended to protect the public, either by shielding personal information, such as select Human Resources records about a county employee, or by making data available through direct publication or dissemination through a PIA request for information. Violating those laws carries penalties, whether for a member of IT staff, a member of the County Council, or the IG themself.

Across the state, the Maryland Public Information Act has been used to reject requests for public information: public officials have abused the PIA's "while protecting legitimate governmental interests" exception to reject PIA requests for any reason they choose, but OIG staff are not members of the public.

I believe the OIG's office, subject to its own recordkeeping and disclosure responsibilities, must not be blocked from accessing the records it needs.

Those who fear the daylight are typically vampires, mole people, or people in positions of power who want to avoid accountability for wrongdoing. People like our president, as well as other folks who some people in this room probably know.

I don't know if I can overstate how much we need to do to begin repairing the broken public trust. When we surround ourselves with a bubble of supporters, it's easy to think things are okay.
People are tired of being lied to; they're tired of excuses, storytelling, and propaganda.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address you today.

So I'm asking the five of you to let the OIG do their job and vote yes on CB-69.

-
Nater Kane