

Pravin Ponnuri  
In support of CR 180 & 181  
11/21/16

Good Evening.

My name is Pravin Ponnuri, and I am a Howard County resident, residing at 4616 Broken Lute Way, Ellicott City MD 21042.

I am here today to testify in support of County Council Resolution 180 & 181. I would like to thank County Councilman Dr Calvin Ball for showing his leadership in introducing these two resolutions.

County resolution 180 relates to the study of the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion practices within certain units of the Howard County government.

County Resolution 181 relates to reviewing the County's equal business opportunity program & purchasing practices with respect to businesses owned by women, minorities and individuals with disabilities to foster equal business opportunities.

According to the United States Bureau of Census about 45% of Howard County residents belong to the minority communities and 51% are women, but only 10% of the new hires over the past 24 months in the Howard County Police Department have been from the minority community. Only 20% of the management ranks are from the minority community, and only 14% of the teachers hired in the past 12 months are from the minority community.

We live in a fast changing world, and Howard County has changed over the past couple of decades. Let's work together to ensure that our workplaces represent the community we live in to ensure harmony in our communities.

The Equal Business opportunity commission was established to assist the efforts of the county in procuring goods and services from business that are owned by minorities, women and individuals with disabilities, but the efforts of this commission might have fallen short. Even though 34.4% of the business in Howard County are minority owned, only 13.7% of the contracts were awarded to them. Even though 51% of Howard County residents are women, only 11.6% of the contracts were awarded to women owned businesses. Even though 5.9% of the Howard County residents are disabled, only 0.08% of the contracts were awarded to individuals with disabilities.

These groups are not asking for a hand out, they are just asking for a level playing field, and maybe a helping hand to guide them through the process. County Resolution 180 & 181 are the first steps in the right direction for these efforts. I urge all members of the county council to support these resolutions.

Together we can bring about the change we deserve, and build the communities we all want to live in.

Thanks for your time and have a great day.

Good evening, Chairperson Ball, and members of the County Council. I'm Rev. Robert Turner and reside at 11401 Barley Field Way, Marriottville, MD, 21104. I have served on the Human Rights Commission for 6 years now, and currently serve as its Chair. I'm thrilled to be here before you, representing the Commission and stand in strong support of Council Resolution 180.

Part of our mission, prescribed by law, includes making recommendations to the Council regarding human rights, conditions and problems. It is in this capacity, I'm confident that the HRC is able to lend our expertise as we work to evaluate opportunities to ensure we are promoting and hiring minorities.

The HRC stands ready to take up this calling and evaluate the hiring practices here in Howard County. We have a shared goal to promote a more equal society and protect against discrimination. Our school system and other area workplaces we are tasked to study offer a reflection of our society and as such, I applaud Dr. Ball and the vision for this legislation so that our employees remain a true reflection of our society.

On behalf of the HRC, I believe CR180 will allow us to use our expertise to make a positive impact in our community, and will assist in not only identifying the importance of celebrating diversity and equality, but in ensuring that all ethnic groups have the opportunity for upward mobility. We look forward to working with the Office of Human Rights to successfully carry out this task.

Thank you for the opportunity to be an integral part of making Howard County a more equitable society in the workplace and in our community.



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# Howard County

## Internal Memorandum

**Subject:** Council Resolution No. 180-2016

**To:** Dr. Calvin Ball  
Council Chairperson

**From:** Lonnie R. Robbins,  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Department of County Administration

**Date:** November 21, 2016

As the County's Chief Administrative Officer, I am also the County's Personnel Officer and I'm charged with overseeing the recruitment and hiring of new employees and the retention of current employees. In the audience today are Wanda Hutchinson, our Human Resources Administrator, Gary Gardner, our Chief of Police and John Butler, our Fire Chief.

We believe that we do an excellent job in the recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion practices across all agencies of County Government.

The Department of Police has 27 Assistant Recruiters to assist in attracting minority candidates. The Department's Recruitment Section places a strong emphasis on attracting African American applicants. The Department recruits at historically African American Colleges by visiting, posting fliers, and faxing testing information. During 2015, the Department attended job fairs at 22 different Universities. They also attended regional job fairs and high school job fairs such as the Wilde Lake Career Fair and the Black Student Achievement College and Career Opportunity Night at Long Reach High School. Additionally, the Department advertises in the National Minority Report newsletter that is distributed to colleges and universities nationwide. The Department advertises in the Equal Opportunity Employment & Education Journal and, in 2015, attended a National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NOBLE) sponsored recruitment event at Delaware State and an NAACP sponsored job fair. The Department also maintains contacts with HCPD Centurions of Justice Minority Officers Association in order to solicit referrals and recommendations on recruitment strategies. In 2015, the Department attended a meeting with the African American Roundtable to discuss recruiting efforts and to hear feedback on areas that the Roundtable believes can be helpful in recruiting. In 2016, the Department plans to attend approximately 31 regional and university career fairs.

The Department uses the School Resource Officers to identify prospective candidates for the Explorer Program, the Youth Police Academy, or for Cadet or Seasonal Cadet positions. The Department also attends the Hispanic Festival and has formed a Community Outreach Division to maximize the Department's ability to recruit highly qualified minority candidates. Recruiters have also attended events at Bridgeway and other churches in the County.

The Department distributes testing information to Korean businesses and churches and attends the Korean Festival. The Department's Asian recruit hires have increased from 4.7% of the class in 2013 to 14.3% of the class in 2014.

The Department of Fire and Rescue Services engages in similar recruitment efforts. They advertise on numerous radio stations such as Radio One, 92Q, iHeart Radio and 98 Rock. They also advertise on websites and through social media sites. They have attended various career fairs including Morgan State University Career Fair, HCPSS BSAP College and Career Night at Long Reach High School, UMBC Diversity Recruitment Night, among others. The Department has also established a Recruitment Committee in order to address strategies to attract successful candidates.

1. Regarding new recruitment classes:

Fire Department:

Earlier this month, the Fire Department began the Department's most diverse academy class to date. The efforts of the newly formed Fire Department Recruitment Committee appear to have yielded a very diverse and qualified group of new hires. On October 31, thirty six Firefighter Trainees started Trainee Class 29. Of the 36 trainees, 22 are Caucasian (16 males/6 female), 6 are African American (5 males/1 female), 3 are Asian (2 males/1 female), 4 are Hispanic (3 males/1 female), and 1 individual identifies as being of 2 or more races (male).

Police Department:

Academy 41 is currently in session and includes 12 Caucasian males, 2 Caucasian females, 1 Hispanic male, 3 Hispanic females and 1 African American male. Accordingly, a total of 26% of Academy 41 is minority.

The most recent lateral academy is Academy No. 28 which includes 2 African American males, 1 Hispanic male, 1 Caucasian female and 8 Caucasian males. Accordingly, a total of 25% of Lateral Academy No. 28 is a minority.

Over a 10 year period, the Police Department has made 310 new hires (59% Caucasian/male; 10% Caucasian/female; 14% African American male; 4% African American female; 7 % Asian/male; 2% Asian female; 3% Hispanic/male; .5% Hispanic female). In sum, over a 10-year period, the Police Department hires have been 69% Caucasian individuals; 18% African Americans; 9% Asian, and 3.5% Hispanic.

The Police Department has experienced notable challenges when it comes to recruitment and hiring. There have been a significant number of retirements and the current climate with law enforcement has resulted in a significant reduction in applicants across the board.

2. Regarding recent promotions:

Fire Department:

During the most recent round of promotions (effective January 1, 2017) the Fire Department increased the diversity of their management team by promoting 8 officers to the rank of Battalion Chief and above, of those promotions 62.5% were non-Caucasian males. The 8 officers who were promoted consisted of 1 female, 2 African Americans, 2 Hispanics, and 3 Caucasian males.

Police Department:

On November 1, 2016 the following individuals were promoted: 9 Caucasian males, 1 Caucasian female, 2 African-American males and one African-American female.

On November 17, 2016 the following individuals were promoted: 2 Caucasian males and one African American female. Thus, the recent promotions have resulted in 31% being non-minority promotions.

While we welcome your Resolution and look forward to working with the Human Rights Commission, we can assure you that our Fire Department and our Police Department have made and continue to make great strides in hiring a diverse background of qualified applicants and continue to value diversity through their promotional processes. We know our residents are comforted when they encounter a first responder who understands and respects their culture, language and beliefs. We know our ranks are the strongest when we embrace diversity to the fullest and open the doors of opportunity to all.