

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2016 Legislative Session

Legislative day # 17

RESOLUTION NO. 163 - 2016

Introduced by: Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

A RESOLUTION confirming the appointment of Robert F. Ford, Jr. to the Human Rights Commission.

Introduced and read first time on November 7, 2016.

By order Jessica Feldmark
Jessica Feldmark, Administrator to the County Council

Read for a second time and a public hearing held on November 21, 2016.

By order Jessica Feldmark
Jessica Feldmark, 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This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted , Adopted with amendments , Failed , Withdrawn by the County Council on December 5, 2016.

Certified by Jessica Feldmark
Jessica Feldmark, 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.

Testimony of Robert F. Ford, Jr.

Howard County Council

November 21, 2016

I am Robert Ford, 5912 Trotter Rd. Clarksville, MD 21029. Thank you members of the Howard County Council for the opportunity to testify on my behalf regarding my appointment to the Howard County Human Rights Commission.

All my life I have passionately believed in the importance of civil rights. It seems like such a simple concept that people should be treated equally no matter their race, religion, gender, nationality, sexual orientation and gender identity. But history has taught us that these rights have to be fought for and defended against those who see minorities as inferior and not worthy of equal rights under the law.

My personal mission has been to advance the rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of our society. Since the early 1980's when I worked with the LGBT Community Center of Baltimore to more recently with Howard County PFLAG, I have been witness to and have been actively involved in a number of hard-fought victories.

I came out at a relatively late age because until then I was fearful of losing my job and risking ostracism from family members, co-workers and neighbors.

It had been a difficult time for me personally, and I have felt much more confident and accepting of my sexual orientation after meeting and then eventually marrying my husband. Proudly, we've been together nearly 37 years.

While we have made considerable progress, LGBT individuals are still vulnerable to discrimination, hatred and violence. Young LGBT people are most vulnerable at home, in school and online. Life is challenging as it is. I don't want these youth to have to struggle with their sexuality or gender identity as I had to.

I am extremely proud that Howard County has been forward-thinking on human rights for over 40 years. However, this county, despite its progressive record, is not immune to bias. Even today we see that there is hatred and discrimination around our nation and the world directed not only towards LGBT people but to all minorities.

I want to do my part in making sure our citizens are treated with the respect they deserve, no matter who they are and who they love. Thank you for your consideration.

Robert F. Ford, Jr.

Education

Baltimore Polytechnic Institute – Graduated in 1973
University of Maryland Baltimore County – Graduated in 1977
B.A. Political Science

Employment

American Can Company - 1975-77
Montgomery Ward's – Sales – 1977-1986
Verizon – Service Technician – 1986-2013
Retired in 2013

Outside Activities

Board of Directors, Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Baltimore - 1983
Board of Directors, Baltimore Antique Bottle Club – 1997 to Present
Show Chairman, Baltimore Antique Bottle Club – 2000-2009
Distinguished Service Award, Baltimore Antique Bottle Club - 2009
Member of PFLAG-Columbia/Howard County 2005 – Present
Photography for *Baltimore OUTloud* & *Washington Blade*
Member of Howard County Democratic Central Committee
Treasurer, Columbia Democratic Club