

CR119-2017

Sept. 18, 2017

Testimony Council Resolution 119-2017

Phyllis B. Madachy

Good evening, members of the Howard County Council. My name is Phyllis Madachy, and I live at 8410 Adderley Avenue, Ellicott City, Maryland 21043.

I'm testifying tonight in favor of Council Resolution 119-2017, the Economic Opportunity and Prosperity Task Force Resolution submitted by Council Chairperson, Jon Weinstein.

I have been asked to serve as co-chair of this Task Force along with Leonardo McClarty who is representing the Howard County Chamber of Commerce. Unfortunately, Leonardo cannot be here tonight and not all 13 members of the proposed Task Force can be here either. However, I would like for those who are here to stand. And, of course, you will be hearing testimony from one member in addition to myself.

My family and I have lived in Howard County since 1974, and I worked for Howard County government for over much of that time. For five years I was VP for Aging and Health at The Coordinating Center, reducing hospital readmission rates of Medicare beneficiaries in West Baltimore

Over 40 years, my interest has been around community based strategies that support vulnerable adults of all ages, recognizing and removing barriers to their success. In addition to community boards on which I serve, I want to describe one board in particular because it is directly relevant to the topics described in this legislation.

I am a charter member of the Paul R. Willging Endowment at Howard Community College that provides scholarships for students wanting health care careers in which they will work with older adults. In his lengthy career Paul worked in long term care policy and operations at the national level and was deeply concerned that there were not enough people going into the fields needed in long term care. There was and remains, a sizeable gap between the number of professionals and paraprofessionals needed and the greater number of older adults and persons with disabilities that need their expertise.

When I retired last year, I did not know I was going to be diving into the area of workforce development of direct care and paraprofessionals. It was a direct outcome of my work with the Willging Endowment and as a result, the Endowment and UMBC's Erickson School of Aging will convene a statewide workforce development summit at Turf Valley on Sept 28. With close to 200 people attending, the Summit will address the lack of a sustainable career pathway which is a significant issue for businesses that need those employees to serve growing numbers of older adults and persons with disabilities.

It is clear to me that this Economic Opportunity and Prosperity Task Force is timely, particularly in the way in which we can look at businesses and employee sharing success as a single unit. The legislation has three themes I find particularly important:

1. The systemic nature of economic opportunity. It's not just a job, not only a career in a county, not just a desirable company. It's also the housing, the transportation, and the ease with which systems interact with each other on a regular basis to plan for the future.
2. Inclusion of nonprofit organizations in the work of the Task Force. That inclusion represents the fact these organizations have an economic impact on the County, as well as provide essential services.
3. Existing policies and programs may inadvertently hamper business and employee growth and, when identified, will be included in the recommendations for change.

In addition, the named appointees in the legislation represent a solid range of voices in Howard County with diverse backgrounds and fields of expertise. The Task Force will recruit additional people to the six subcommittees as the work plans are developed and engage the community in the process.

Finally, I believe the proposal has the right intent and strikes the right balance. By joining community members, businesses and content experts together in a single process of discovery, we have an opportunity to provide recommendations to the County Council in December 2018 that are actionable.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify for this legislation and I welcome any questions you may have.

Submitted,

Phyllis Madachy

Good Evening!

My name is Jay Parekh. I reside at 3730 Garand Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042. I am here this evening to testify in favor of CR-119-2017

I would like to split my testimony into two parts. First, to say a few words about why I welcome formation of a Task Force to study Economic Opportunity and Prosperity in Howard County. And then I will speak as to why I am interested in serving on the Task Force.

Howard County was a wonderful and affordable bedroom community to Washington DC where the people working in the DC region liked to bring up their families. It also had a good portion of land that was utilized for Agriculture. Over last 25 years, County has seen changes that have transformed it into a community that not only is a suburban location to DC and Baltimore, but a place where people want to live, bring up their families. We have been ranked the best place, best schools, library system, Recreation and Parks etc., and I can go on and on. However, BRAC, DISA relocation, large Government contractors locating in the County, reorganization of downtown Columbia are some of the items that have changed the County. They have impacted jobs, salaries, business opportunities, demographics, school capacities, affordable housing availability for the County.

This Task Force as proposed will study (with the help of sub committees) all of the areas, such as jobs, workforce, transportation, business environment, small business growth, economic independence for the residents of Howard County.

And that is why I support CR-119-2017.

Now, why I would want to be involved.

I have been working in the County for 34 years and have lived here for 24 years. Over the years my wife and I have had privilege of being involved in many local volunteering efforts. We have two daughters who have graduated from Howard County School System and we couldn't be more proud of them. It is time for us to give back to the community.

I have worked as a Land Development Engineer in the County for 16 years and then have been a small business owner in Information Technology field for last 17 years. I have served on the Technology Council, Equal Business Commission and Economic Development Board. I have a Master's Degree in Engineering from University of Maryland and have practiced as a Professional Engineer. With my education, knowledge and experience, I am confident that I can contribute effectively and help achieve a comprehensive look at the State of the County and create a Road Map for the future Economic Opportunity and Prosperity.