



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

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Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
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Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the Department of Community Resources and Services (DCRS), I am pleased to submit testimony regarding CB53-2019 *An ACT Amending the Membership and Responsibilities of the Board to Promote Self-Sufficiency (BPSS)*.

The BPSS was created in 2009 with the mission of reducing the incidence of poverty in Howard County by acting as a planning and coordinating body for initiatives that promote the economic stability of individuals and families. The Board does its work by reviewing, coordinating and aligning efforts across sectors to improve the quality of life for all Howard County Residents.

The proposed changes in CB53-2019 do not change the substantive purpose, mission or work of the BPSS. The Board remains an important and vital voice for our community, and valued advisors to the County Executive. The Board has been actively involved over the past 2 years in a planning process that included re-envisioning their work and strategic planning. They were actively involved and consulted in the changes that are being proposed before you today. The changes received a full vote of approval prior to submitting CB53-2019 for your consideration.

The proposed changes before you include:

- a) Language that expands the definitions of eligible members: ex. Individuals who have used services of emergency, transitional or subsidized housing; along with updating language/terms of art like moving away from “welfare to work” to phrases like “stable employment”;
- b) Removing from BPSS the sole responsibility for the Human Services Master Plan while maintaining a meaningful role in its development, and allocation of resources to support it; and
- c) Removing the responsibility for overseeing the Stewart B. McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act Funds. These funds remain the responsibility of DCRS as the Lead Agency for HUD funds and are now administered under the advice and guidance of the Howard County Coalition to End Homelessness and its Board, both established in 2017.

These proposed changes are made in recognition of the need to better align the work of the Board with the growth in infrastructure and capacity of both DCRS and the community as a whole. It is our hope that the evolution of the Boards work will place them in a stronger position to speak directly to the desires of the community to develop programs, policies, resources and funding streams to support a pathway for self-sufficiency for county residents.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline R. Scott, JD, M.L.
Director

The Department of Community Resources and Services provides vital human services through its offices of ADA Coordination, Aging and Independence, Children and Families, Community Partnerships, Consumer Protection, Human Trafficking Prevention, Local Children’s Board, and Veterans and Military Families.