

Office of the County Auditor

Auditor's Analysis

Council Bill No. 7-2020

Introduced: February 3, 2020

Auditor: Maya Cameron

Fiscal Impact:

There is no expected fiscal impact of Council Bill 7-2020.

Potential impact may result in an increased volume of disclosures filed with the County Auditor. These would be investigated by existing staff.

Purpose:

The intent of this legislation is to include rights and protections for whistleblowers against retaliation and to authorize the disclosure of information regarding actions taken by a Howard County official, employee, or contractor. Such actions include: violation of laws or regulations; gross waste of funds; abuse of authority; or ethics violations. Unless specifically prohibited by law, these disclosures will be kept confidential to the extent the law allows.

Other Comments:

- The County Auditor website includes a link for reporting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse: <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Auditor/Online-Form-to-Report-Fraud-Waste-and-Abuse>
- Whistleblower reprisal is among the list of things to report to the County Auditor according to the frequently asked questions “What Can Be Reported?” section of the County Auditor website: <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Auditor/FAQs-Report-Fraud-Waste-and-Abuse>
- The County Auditor, Human Resource Administrator, and County Solicitor are most likely to be the recipients of a whistleblower complaint. In that event, the Code does not currently specify the roles and responsibilities of those departments.
- The Appeals Section of the employee manual (pages 12-16) specifies the County’s policy that all employees be permitted to express views concerning the terms and conditions of their employment without fear of reprisal. It also provides both informal and formal procedures in the event an employee seeks to appeal actions taken by the County.
- Human Resources does not foresee procedural changes or a financial impact as a result of the implementation of this legislation.