

Sayers, Margery

From: Hiruy Hadgu <hadguhiruy@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 20, 2021 4:29 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: HCCA Testimony CB4-2021
Attachments: HCCA - Testimony CB4-2021.docx

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Greetings,

Please find attached HCCA's testimony on CB4-2021.

Best Regards,

Hiruy.



Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

HCCA Testimony – Public hearing 01/19/2021

CB4-2021

The Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA) supports in part and opposes in part the provisions of CB4-2021.

The HCCA expresses support to the provision of CB4 that would require a fiscal impact analysis to be submitted prior to the introduction of each bill or legislation for consideration by the council. Introducing the fiscal impact analysis at the time of introduction would give more time for consideration by public. You may recall that the HCCA expressed serious concern about the current timing at the time it was proposed. We are gratified that this concern is addressed by the bill. Since it is not clear, whether fiscal impact analysis would be public at the time of introduction of bill, we would urge that it be clear.

We would like to point the council's attention to lines 1 and 2 on page 3 of the bill. If the bill is passed, the sentence after the comma on line 1 might not be applicable anymore as it was applicable to the timing if the analysis was submitted the Thursday before the public hearing.

The HCCA does not support the change in the bill that allows the County Executive to get out of preparing a fiscal impact analysis under emergency conditions. The definition of

“emergency” leaves a lot to the imagination and could be used as a loophole. For example, we are currently under a state of emergency. Does this mean the County Auditor or County

Executive don't have to provide this fiscal impact analysis?



HCCA

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The Administration's explanation says the intent is to "extend the exception afforded to the Auditor to the County Executive", but we disagree that analysis as the Auditor and the County Executive are subject to different accountability structures. The County Executive as a co-equal branch of government can chose to ignore the requirement without concern of accountability, especially if he or she can influence the Council Chair to allow this transgression.

So we request that the county council specify the categories of emergency under which the exceptions are allowed. A written documentation of this emergency with an explanation of how that emergency prevented the preparation of the analysis.

We also think it would serve transparency and accountability better if there is a stipulation that the bill will not be introduced without the fiscal analysis.

Hiruy Hadgu

HCCA Board of Directors



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Hiruy Hadgu, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CB4-2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Hiruy Hadgu

Signature: _____

Date: 19 Jan 2021

Organization: HCCA

Organization Address: HCCA

P.O. Box 89 Ellicott City MD 21041

Number of Members: 500

Name of Chair/President: Stu Kohn

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.

Sayers, Margery

From: Dan H <westphillydan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 7:12 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: CB4 2021 Testimony on behalf of Indivisible Howard County
Attachments: CB4 2021 testimony 011921 for Howard County Indivisible.docx

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Please find testimony by Dan Hajdo on behalf of Howard County Indivisible regarding CB4 2021.

thank you,
Dan Hajdo



CB4-2021

My name is Dan Hajdo and I am to here to testify on behalf of Howard County Indivisible. We urge approval of main part of CB-4, the change in timing for fiscal impact statements, and urge amendment to two other parts of CB-4.

- 1) First, then, we support the change in the timing of fiscal analysis submission. Changing it to prior to introduction instead of prior to a hearing – is a step in the right direction.

Anything that tends toward greater transparency and accountability to the public (which we see as the main benefit of the bill) is welcome. Getting the fiscal analysis to the public as soon as possible gives the public more time to review and assess legislation.

So far so good, but then ... you need to publish it when it is submitted.

- 2) Hence, the timing for making the fiscal impact statement available to the public should be made concurrent with the deadline for the fiscal impact statement.

If the impact statement is prepared, and presented to the council with the legislation, publish it. Otherwise, there is no benefit to the public.

One of the stated purposes of CB4-2021 is to “promote oversight that builds public confidence in government decision making;” meaning Council oversight of the Executive. Oddly enough, “promoting oversight *by the public*, and transparency *to the public*,” is not a stated purpose.

It should be *the* purpose. Presenting fiscal analysis to the council well before releasing it to the public will not improve oversight by the public, and it *definitely will not* promote “confidence in government decision-making.”

As long as people are watching. And we are.

- 3) Finally, we urge amendment to the bill to grant exceptions to the deadline “only for emergency legislation.”

The vague, blanket process for granting exceptions as written leaves enough room to drive a truck full of patronage through it.

Now the rationale for granting exceptions in the first place, is that emergency legislation may require quick action. That is reasonable. Very well, let the legislation make this clear.

Moreover, “emergency legislation” must be narrowly defined. An identifiable natural disaster, for example, may warrant emergency legislation. A sudden change in the market that affects a developer’s chance to maximize profit does not.

In short, in all but the most limited of circumstances, if a fiscal impact statement cannot be prepared before introduction of the bill, the bill simply cannot be introduced.

Dan Hajdo,

IndivisibleHoCoMD Economic Equity Team



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Dan Hajdo, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard County Indivisible to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CB-4 2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Dan Hajdo

Signature: _____

Date: 01/18/2021

Organization: Howard County Indivisible

Organization Address: P.O. Box 603, Savage MD, 20763

P.O. Box 603, Savage MD, 20763

Number of Members: 600

Name of Chair/President: Elizabeth Kate

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.