



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Lonnie R. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer

Voice/Relay

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**Subject:** Written Testimony regarding the creation of the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Commission

**To:** Lonnie R. Robbins,  
Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Yolanda F. Sonnier, Administrator *YFS*  
Office of Human Rights and Equity

**Date:** September 20, 2022

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The Office of Human Rights and Equity (OHRE) is in support of the creation of the Asian American Pacific Islander Commission which will be contained in the Howard County Code, Section 12.220.

In February 2021, County Executive Ball created the AAPI Workgroup with a mission of expanding on existing relationship and exploring ways to improve communication with the Asian American Pacific Islander community to ensure that every resident is aware that Howard County Government strives to treat every person fairly and equally.

The workgroup was fortunate to have dedicated community members who examined issues relating to Business and Economic Development, Health and Wellness, Government Access and Community Engagement for the AAPI community during the eighteen (18) months the workgroup was active. The workgroup issued its final report in July 2022 providing four (4) recommendations to the County Executive. One of the recommendations was to establish the workgroup as a permanent commission in Howard County Government.

Establishing this body as a commission will ensure there is consistent representation to advance opportunities for Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals and families in Howard County and work in partnership with County leadership, departments and the community at large to reduce the systemic inequities affecting AAPI residents.

In Howard County, where we are proud of our diversity, we must continue to strive to ensure all our residents are included, have access to services, feel welcomed and have equitable opportunities. The establishment of this commission will not only ensure representation, services and education to the AAPI community but will make great strides towards improving our entire county.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The 1<sup>st</sup> year of this Commission will probably be setting priorities, examining continuing community needs and establishing the plan for outreach, events, trainings and other programming. Any expenses of the commission in FY23 will be covered by OHRE's budget.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email, [ysonnier@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:ysonnier@howardcountymd.gov) or by phone at 410-313-6430.