



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Voice/Relay

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To: Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer

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

Subject: **Testimony regarding imposing a cap on the amount of damages a person aggrieved by a prohibited employment action under Section 12.217 of the Howard County Human Rights Code**

Date: December 19, 2023

The intent of this proposed amendment is to establish a cap for recovery of compensatory damages for future pecuniary losses, emotional pain, suffering, inconvenience, mental anguish, loss of enjoyment of life or other nonpecuniary losses for persons aggrieved by a prohibited employment action under the Howard County Human Rights Code. This amendment would make the damages recoverable pursuant to the Howard County Human Rights Code for an unlawful employment action consistent with the federal and state antidiscrimination laws.

Implementing such a cap on compensatory damages is consistent with the purpose of federal and state antidiscrimination laws as well as public policy aimed at ensuring that any employee subjected to unlawful discrimination will receive a monetary award for harm suffered while also eliminating discrimination in employment. This amendment also ensures that employers who have engaged in unlawful employment practices will eliminate such practices without being burdened by jury verdicts which could end their business operation by bankruptcy.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact as a result of this Code amendment. This legislation will ensure employees aggrieved by an unlawful employment action under the Howard County Human Rights Code are compensated while also ensuring there is predictability to the financial liability of employers found responsible for violating the Howard County Human Rights Code.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via email, ysonnier@howardcountymd.gov or by phone at 410-313-6430 Thank you.