COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2019, Legislative Day No. 4

Bill No. 4-19

Mr. Tom Quirk, Chairman
By Request of County Executive

By the County Council, February 19, 2019

A BILL
ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Baltimore County Ethics Law - Amendments

FOR the purpose of amending the Baltimore County Ethics Law; clarifying what may be
disclosed to a respondent; clarifying that the Commission may adopt certain rules;
expanding the number of public officials who must complete training in the Ethics Law;
eliminating the 2 hour requirement for training in the Ethics Law; altering the date for
providing in person lobbyist training; authorizing the Ethics Commission to eliminate in
person lobbyist training if it offers online lobbyist training; prohibiting certain former
public officials from engaging in certain activities with the county for one year after
termination of employment; authorizing the Ethics Commission to provide for electronic
filing of financial disclosure statements; amending and simplifying the definition of
"lobbyist"; requiring certain lobbyists' forms to be made available electronically;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.
Strike out indicates matter stricken from bill.
Underlining indicates amendments to bill.
authorizing the Ethics Commission to provide for electronic filing of lobbyists' forms; making technical changes; providing the application of certain portions of this Act; and generally relating to amending the Ethics Law.

By repealing and reenacting, without amendments
Section 5-1-201(e)
Article 5. Pensions and Retirement
Title 1. Employees Retirement System
Subtitle 2. Retirement System
Baltimore County Code, 2015

By repealing and reenacting, with amendments
Sections 7-1-105(g)(3) and (4), 7-1-201(b), 7-1-203, 7-1-304(b), 7-1-401(a), 7-1-501(c) and (d), 7-1-502, and 7-1-510
Article 7. Public Ethics and Open Government
Title 1. Public Ethics
Baltimore County Code, 2015

By adding
Section 7-1-401(g)
Article 7. Public Ethics and Open Government
Title 1. Public Ethics
Baltimore County Code, 2015

By repealing and reenacting, without amendments
Section 7-1-105(a)(3) and 7-1-501(a)
Article 7. Public Ethics and Open Government
Title 1. Public Ethics
Baltimore County Code, 2015

SECTION 1. BE IN ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Laws of Baltimore County shall read as follows:
Article 5. Pensions and Retirement
Title 1. Employees Retirement System
Subtitle 2. Retirement System

§ 5-1-201.

(e) "Appointed department head" means the County Executive, County Administrative Officer, Deputy County Administrative Officers, senior administrative assistants to the County Administrative Officer, secretary to the County Executive, County Auditor, Senior Council Assistant, Supervisor of Assessments of the County, Executive Director of the County Revenue Authority, secretary to the County Council, the Zoning Commissioner, and those persons who are the heads of offices and departments created by legislative act of the County Council as provided for in Section 502 of the Charter or as enumerated in Sections 503 and 504 of the Charter, other than the departments of education, libraries, health and welfare. Any person who, on July 1, 1984, was serving at one (1) of the positions enumerated herein may elect to contribute to the retirement system all amounts with interest required to be contributed with respect to such service as a department head accounting from that date. Any person who was serving as Deputy County Administrative Officer, senior administrative assistants to the County Administrative Officer, or secretary to the County Executive on or after December 1, 1987, may elect to contribute to the retirement system all amounts with interest required to be contributed with respect to such service as a department head accounting from the date of appointment. Any person who was serving as a Senior Council Assistant on or after December 1, 1985, may elect to contribute to the retirement system all amounts with interest required to be contributed with respect to such service as a department head accounting from the date of appointment.
§ 7-1-105.

(a)(3) The Commission shall promptly provide the respondent with a copy of the complaint.

(g) (3) [The Commission shall disclose the identity of the complainant to the respondent, at the request of the respondent.

(4) The Commission shall meet in closed session whenever it is considering a complaint being processed in accordance with this title or with rules and regulations adopted by the Commission until a final Commission determination is made regarding disposition of the complaint.

§ 7-1-201.

(b) The Commission [shall] MAY adopt rules and regulations in order to carry out the provisions of this title, including:

(1) The conduct of Commission meetings to consider an advisory opinion request or a complaint processed in accordance with Subtitle 1 of this title;

(2) Providing access to Commission records relating to an advisory opinion request or a complaint processed in accordance with Subtitle 1 of this title; and

(3) Public examination of financial disclosure statements.
§ 7-1-203.

(a) (1) The Commission shall provide a training course [of at least 2 hours] on the requirements of the county public ethics law for the following elected officials and public officials:

(i) An individual who serves as an appointed department head as defined in Section 5-1-201(e) of the Code;

(ii) An individual who serves as a deputy in any department or office as provided for in Section 502 of the Charter or as enumerated in Sections 503 and 504 of the Charter;

(iii) The Chairman and members of the County Council and appointed legislative staff to each member;

(iv) The administrative assistant to the County Council;

(v) The deputy secretary to the County Council;

(vi) The Deputy County Auditor;

(vii) The Administrative Law Judges of the Office of Administrative Hearings;

(viii) The chairman and members of the Board of Appeals;

(ix) The [chairman and members] CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of the Revenue Authority;

(x) The chairman and members of the Planning Board;

(xi) The chairman and members of the Ethics Commission; [and]

(xii) The People's Counsel and Deputy People's Counsel; AND

(XIII) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, ANY OTHER PUBLIC OFFICIAL IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT DESIGNATED BY THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OR
ANY OTHER PERSON IN THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, INCLUDING THE OFFICE OF
THE COUNTY AUDITOR, DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY TO THE COUNTY
COUNCIL.

(2) IN DESIGNATING OTHER PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO COMPLETE THE
TRAINING REQUIRED BY THIS SECTION, THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
AND SECRETARY TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL SHALL INCLUDE THOSE PUBLIC
OFFICIALS WHOSE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE LIKELY TO
SUBSTANTIALLY AFFECT PRIVATE INTERESTS AND REQUIRE SIGNIFICANT
PARTICIPATION THROUGH DECISION OR THE EXERCISE OF SIGNIFICANT
JUDGMENT, AND WITHOUT SUBSTANTIAL SUPERVISION AND REVIEW IN TAKING
GOVERNMENT ACTION REGARDING:

(I) CONTRACTING OR PROCUREMENT;
(II) ADMINISTERING GRANTS;
(III) LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING;
(IV) REGULATING, LICENSING OR INSPECTING ANY BUSINESS;
(V) OTHER DECISIONS WITH ECONOMIC IMPACT, WHICH MAY INCLUDE
PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE; AND
(VI) LAW ENFORCEMENT.

[(2)] (3) The individuals listed in this subsection shall complete the initial training
course [within 6 months of the effective date of this act or] within 6 months [of] AFTER filling a
vacancy, and once each year thereafter.
(b) (1) (i) The Commission shall provide a training course for an individual registered as a lobbyist under Subtitle 5 of this title at least twice each year on the provisions of the county public ethics law relevant to regulated lobbyists.

(ii) One training course shall be held each [January] MARCH.

(2) (i) When an individual initially registers as a regulated lobbyist, the Commission shall provide the individual with information on the provisions of the county public ethics law relevant to regulated lobbyists.

(ii) The individual shall complete the initial training course within 6 months of registration, and once each year thereafter.

(c) (1) The required training courses may be administered by the Commission in person or online.

(2) IF THE COMMISSION ESTABLISHES AN ONLINE TRAINING COURSE FOR LOBBYISTS, IT MAY ELIMINATE THE IN PERSON TRAININGS REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(1) OF THIS SECTION.

(d) The Commission may adopt regulations to further administer the requirements of this section.

(e) The Commission shall publish on its website information related to the names of individuals required to complete the training course and the date of compliance with this [subsection] SECTION.
§ 7-1-401. (a) The following public officials shall file the financial disclosure statements required under this subtitle:

(1) [The County Executive;] EACH PUBLIC OFFICIAL REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE TRAINING REQUIRED UNDER § 7-1-203 OF THIS TITLE;

(2) [The County Administrative Officer and the Deputy County Administrative Officers;

(3) The chairman and members of the County Council;

(4) The County Attorney, the Deputy County Attorney, and an Acting County Attorney or Acting Deputy County Attorney;

(5) The secretary to the County Executive;

(6) The secretary to the County Council;

(7) The administrative assistant to the County Council;

(8) The Administrative Law Judges of the Office of Administrative Hearings;

(9) Department heads, deputy] (6) DEPUTY department heads, and acting department heads and deputy department heads;

(10) Office heads, deputy] (7) DEPUTY office heads, and acting office heads and deputies;

(11) The chairman and members of the Board of Appeals;

(12) The County Auditor and the Deputy Auditor;

(13) The chairman, members, and Executive Director of the Revenue Authority;

(14) The chairman and members of the Planning Board;

(15) The chairman and members of the Board of Recreation and Parks;
(9) The chairman and members of the Electrical Administrative Board;

(10) The chairman and members of the Plumbing Board;

(11) The chairman and members of the Board of Health;

(12) The chairman and members of the Board of Library Trustees;

(13) The paid and unpaid members of boards of all state agencies funded in whole or in part by the county;

(14) The chairman and members of the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board;

(15) The chairman and members of the Workforce Development Council;

(16) The chairman and members of the Telecommunications Advisory Panel;

and

(17) Subject to subsection (f)(2) of this section, the chairman and members of the Board of Trustees of the Community College of Baltimore County.

(G) THE COMMISSION MAY DEVELOP PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENTS MAY BE FILED ELECTRONICALLY WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COST TO THE INDIVIDUAL WHO FILES THE STATEMENT.

§ 7-1-501.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(c) "Lobbying" [means communicating] MEANS:
(1) COMMUNICATING [with] IN THE PRESENCE OF a public official of the legislative or executive branch of county government, [in the presence of that public official,] for the purpose of influencing legislative or executive [action.] ACTION; OR

(2) "Lobbying" includes engaging in activities with the express purpose of soliciting others to communicate with a public official of the legislative or executive branch of the county government for the purpose of influencing legislative or executive action.

(d) (1) "Lobbyist" means a person who engages in lobbying in the presence of any official or employee of the legislative or executive branch, and who, within a reporting period:

(i) For the purpose of influencing legislative action:

1. Communicates with a public official of the legislative or executive branch and:

2. A. Incurs $100 or more of expenses, cumulatively, not including personal travel and subsistence expenses; or

B. Receives $500 or more as compensation;

(ii) For the purpose of influencing executive action:

1. Communicates with public officials of the executive branch; and

2. Expends a cumulative value of $100 or more on meals, beverages, special events, or gifts for public officials of the executive branch; or

(iii) For the purpose of influencing the comprehensive rezoning process:

1. Engages in lobbying; and
2. Expends money, irrespective of the amount, on a public official for meals, beverages, special events, or gifts.

(2) "Lobbyist" does not include a person who strictly:

(i) Provides professional services in drafting bills or in advising and rendering opinions to clients regarding the construction and effect of proposed or pending County Council actions;

(ii) Appears before the County Council at the specific invitation or request of the Council, provided the person does not engage in any other activity in connection with the passage or defeat of County Council actions;

(iii) Appears at public hearings of the County Council or a county agency, board, or commission, if the person does not:

1. Engage in other lobbying activities in connection with the passage or defeat of County Council actions or the approval or disapproval of actions of the county agency, board, or commission; and

2. Expend money on food, entertainment, or other gifts for a public official in connection with the appearance;

(iv) Makes appearances as part of the official duties of a duly elected or appointed official or employee of the state or a political subdivision of the state, or of the United States, provided the appearance is not on behalf of another entity;

(v) Is a publisher or member of the press, radio, or television working in the ordinary course of the business of disseminating news or making editorial comment to the general public, provided the person does not engage in other lobbying that would
directly and specifically benefit the economic, business, or professional interests of
the person or the person's employer;

(vi) Appears before the County Council at the specific invitation or request of a
registered lobbyist, provided no other lobbying act is undertaken, and provided the
witness identifies to the Council that the person is testifying at the request of the
lobbyist;

(vii) Makes appearances as part of the official duties of an officer, director, member,
or employee of an association engaged exclusively in lobbying for counties and
municipalities and not on behalf of another entity; or

(viii) Represents a bona fide religious organization solely for the purpose of
protecting the right of its own members to practice the doctrine of the
organization.] "LOBBYIST" MEANS A PERSON REQUIRED TO REGISTER
AND REPORT EXPENSES RELATED TO LOBBYING UNDER THIS
SUBTITLE.

§ 7-1-502.

(a) (1)(I) Except as provided in PARAGRAPH (4) OF THIS SUBSECTION AND subsection
(b) of this section, A PERSON OR ENTITY WHO ENGAGES IN LOBBYING [a lobbyist]
shall file a lobbying registration with the Commission IF THE PERSON OR ENTITY,
DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR:

1. EXPENDS, EXCLUSIVE OF PERSONAL TRAVEL AND SUBSISTANCE
EXPENSES, IN EXCESS OF $100 IN FURTHERANCE OF THIS ACTIVITY; OR
2. IS COMPENSATED IN EXCESS OF $500 IN CONNECTION WITH THIS
ACTIVITY; OR

(II) FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFLUENCING THE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING
MAP PROCESS:

1. ENGAGES IN LOBBYING; AND

2. EXPENDS MONEY, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE AMOUNT, ON A PUBLIC
OFFICIAL FOR MEALS, BEVERAGES, SPECIAL EVENTS, OR GIFTS.

(2) THE PERSON OR ENTITY SHALL FILE THE REGISTRATION:

(i) On or before the beginning of the year in which the lobbyist expects to engage in
lobbying; or

(ii) Within 5 days after engaging in lobbying activities.

[(2)] (3) A lobbyist who engages in lobbying on behalf of more than one person shall file
a separate lobbying registration for each person.

(4) THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE EXEMPT FROM REGISTRATION
UNDER THIS SECTION:

(I) PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IN DRAFTING BILLS OR ADVISING AND
RENDERING OPINIONS TO CLIENTS AS TO THE CONSTRUCTION AND EFFECT OF
PROPOSED OR PENDING COUNTY COUNCIL ACTIONS WHEN THESE SERVICES DO
NOT OTHERWISE CONSTITUTE LOBBYING ACTIVITIES;

(II) APPEARANCES BEFORE THE COUNTY COUNCIL ON ITS SPECIFIC
INVITATION OR REQUEST IF THE PERSON OR ENTITY ENGAGES IN NO FURTHER
OR OTHER ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE PASSAGE OR DEFEAT OF COUNTY COUNCIL ACTIONS;

(III) APPEARANCES BEFORE AN AGENCY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH ON THE SPECIFIC REQUEST OF THE AGENCY IF THE PERSON OR ENTITY ENGAGES IN NO FURTHER OR OTHER ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE PASSAGE OR DEFEAT OF ANY AGENCY EXECUTIVE ACTION;

(IV) APPEARANCE AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL DUTIES OF A DULY ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIAL OF THE STATE OR A POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THE STATE, OR OF THE UNITED STATES, AND NOT ON BEHALF OF ANY OTHER ENTITY;

(V) ACTIONS OF A PUBLISHER OR WORKING MEMBER OF THE PRESS, RADIO, OR TELEVISION IN THE ORDINARY COURSE OF THE BUSINESS OF DISSEMINATING NEWS OR MAKING EDITORIAL COMMENT TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO DOES NOT ENGAGE IN FURTHER OR OTHER LOBBYING THAT WOULD DIRECTLY AND SPECIFICALLY BENEFIT THE ECONOMIC, BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF THE PERSON OR ENTITY OR THE EMPLOYER OF THE PERSON OR ENTITY;

(VI) APPEARANCES BY AN INDIVIDUAL BEFORE THE COUNTY COUNCIL AT THE SPECIFIC INVITATION OF A REGISTERED LOBBYIST IF THE PERSON PERFORMS NO OTHER LOBBYING ACT AND NOTIFIES THE COUNTY COUNCIL THAT THE PERSON OR ENTITY IS TESTIFYING AT THE REQUEST OF THE LOBBYIST;
(VII) APPEARANCES BY AN INDIVIDUAL BEFORE A GOVERNMENT AGENCY AT THE SPECIFIC INVITATION OF A REGISTERED LOBBYIST IF THE PERSON PERFORMS NO OTHER LOBBYING ACT AND NOTIFIES THE GOVERNMENT AGENCY THAT THE PERSON OR ENTITY IS TESTIFYING AT THE REQUEST OF THE LOBBYIST;

(VIII) THE REPRESENTATION OF A BONA FIDE RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THE RIGHT OF ITS OWN MEMBERS TO PRACTICE THE DOCTRINE OF THE ORGANIZATION; AND

(IX) APPEARANCE AS PART OF THE OFFICIAL DUTIES OF AN OFFICER, DIRECTOR, MEMBER OR EMPLOYEE OF AN ASSOCIATION ENGAGED EXCLUSIVELY IN LOBBYING FOR COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES AND NOT ON BEHALF OF ANY OTHER ENTITY.

(b)(1) A person who engages in lobbying, including making public appearances, for the purpose of influencing the comprehensive [rezoning] ZONING MAP process is not required to file a lobbying registration provided the person:

(i) Does not expend money on a public official for meals, beverages, special events, or gifts; and

(ii) Registers with the secretary to the County Council not later than 5 days after the last lobbying activity.

(2) The registration filed with the secretary to the County Council shall:

(i) Include the following information:
1. The person's full and legal name and address and the full and legal name and address of any person on whose behalf the person is acting; and

2. The property involved and the map issue number if available;

(ii) Be made a permanent part of the County Council record; and

(iii) Be posted on the council website.

§ 7-1-510.

(a) (1) The Commission or an office designated by the Commission shall:

(i) Maintain all registrations and reports filed under this subtitle; and

(ii) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, make the registrations and reports available during normal office hours for examination and copying by the public.

(2) (I) The Commission may establish administrative procedures for public examination and copying of records.

(II) LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS, ANNUAL REPORTS AND TERMINATIONS OF REGISTRATION FILED UNDER THIS TITLE SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION VIA THE COMMISSION'S INTERNET WEB PAGES.

(B) THE COMMISSION MAY DEVELOP PROCEDURES UNDER WHICH LOBBYING REGISTRATIONS, ANNUAL REPORTS AND TERMINATIONS OF REGISTRATION MAY BE FILED ELECTRONICALLY WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COST TO THE INDIVIDUAL WHO FILES THE REGISTRATION, REPORT, OR TERMINATION.

[(b)] (C) The Commission or an office designated by the Commission shall retain registrations and reports for 4 years after the date of receipt.
SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that the Laws of Baltimore County shall read as follows:

Article 7. Public Ethics and Open Government

§ 7-1-304.

(b) (1) In this subsection:

(i) "Participated significantly" means direct participation in a matter that involves the county government by a former public official in which the former public official's involvement was or appeared to be significant to a decision, approval, or recommendation concerning the county matter;

(ii) "Participated significantly" includes the participation of a subordinate of the former public official if the subordinate was actually directed in the county issue by the former public official; and

(iii) "Participated significantly" is not established by official responsibility (although official responsibility may be a factor in determining the significance of the involvement), knowledge, perfunctory involvement, or involvement on an administrative or peripheral matter.

(2) Except for a former member of the County Council, who shall be subject to the restrictions provided under paragraph [(3)] (4) of this subsection, a former public official may not assist or represent a party, other than the county or the state, in a case, contract, or other specific matter for compensation if:

(i) The matter involves county government; and
(ii) The former public official participated significantly in the matter as a public official.

(3) A FORMER COUNTY EXECUTIVE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OR HEAD OF AN OFFICE OR DEPARTMENT OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT APPOINTED AND CONFIRMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 402(D)(9) OF THE CHARTER MAY NOT ASSIST OR REPRESENT A PARTY, OTHER THAN THE COUNTY OR THE STATE, IN A CASE, CONTRACT, OR OTHER SPECIFIC MATTER INVOLVING THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT FOR COMPENSATION FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR FOLLOWING THE FORMER EMPLOYEE'S TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT WITH THE COUNTY.

[(3)] (4) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, until the conclusion of one year after the member leaves office, a former elected official may not assist or represent another party for compensation in a matter that is the subject of legislative action by the County Council.

(ii) The limitation under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph on representation by a former elected official does not apply to the former elected official's representation of a municipal corporation, county, or state governmental entity.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that, subject to Section 6 of this Act, Section 2 of this Act shall apply only to an individual who terminated employment on or after the effective date of this Act.
SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that the public officials newly
required to complete the Ethics training by this Act shall complete the training by the end of
calendar year 2019.

SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that notwithstanding § 7-1-401(d)(3) of
the Baltimore County Code, 2015, the public officials newly required to complete financial
disclosure statements by this Act shall complete their financial disclosure statements covering
calendar year 2018 by the later of: (1) May 30, 2019, (2) within 30 days after appointment, or (3)
within 30 days after designation by the County Administrative Officer or Secretary to the County
Council, as provided in § 7-1-203(a) of the Baltimore County Code, 2015, as applicable.

SECTION 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this Act, having passed by the
affirmative vote of five members of the County Council, shall take effect March 31, 2019.