

**Department of Fiscal Services**  
Maryland General Assembly

**FISCAL NOTE**

House Bill 196 (Howard County Delegation)  
Commerce and Government Matters

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**Howard County Ethics Bill**  
**Ho. Co. 1-97**

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This bill requires an applicant in zoning matters in Howard County to file an affidavit stating whether the applicant is currently engaged in business with an elected official when the application is filed. The bill also requires an applicant to file an affidavit if the applicant begins engaging in business with an elected official between the filing of the application and the disposition of the application. The bill defines “engaging in business” as any sale, purchase, lease, or other transaction involving goods, services, or real property. It also includes any contract, award, loan, extension of credit, or any other financial transaction. However, it does not include the sale of personal goods, family goods, or household goods. Violators are subject to a fine not exceeding \$5,000.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Although the bill could increase the number of affidavits filed in Howard County, the county could collect and review the information with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal effect on small businesses as discussed below.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**Small Business Effect:** Although small businesses may experience an increase in the number of affidavits that they file, it would not significantly affect their costs. To the extent that small businesses violate the affidavit requirements, they could experience an increase in costs due to imposition of fines.

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**Information Source(s):** Howard County, Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 20, 1997

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