

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2025 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 481  
Economic Matters

(Washington County Delegation)

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**Washington County - Board of License Commissioners - Membership**

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This bill alters, in Washington County only, the composition of the board of license commissioners. Specifically, based on the results of the preceding election for the Washington County Board of County Commissioners, two members must belong to the political party that received the highest aggregated number of votes, and one member must belong to the political party that received the second highest aggregated number of votes. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill only affects local government operations.

**Local Effect:** None. The bill is procedural in nature and does not affect Washington County finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The Washington County Board of License Commissioners consists of three members serving six-year terms, each appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Maryland Senate if the Senate is in session when the appointment is made (otherwise by the Governor alone). Each member must be a resident and voter of the county as well as an individual of high moral character and integrity and of recognized business capacity. No more than two members of the board may belong to the same political party. A board member may not have a pecuniary or other interest in any phase of the manufacture, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages. Annual salaries for the board

must be set by the Washington County Board of County Commissioners to be payable from the alcoholic beverage license fees.

**Additional Comments:** Although the bill establishes additional requirements for membership on the board of license commissioners based on party affiliation and the results of the quadrennial election of Washington County Board of County Commissioners, it does not modify the six-year terms for the board. Accordingly, it is unclear how the requirement for political affiliation will be implemented *vis-à-vis* terms of sitting members.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 855 and HB 921 of 2024.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 503 (Washington County Senators) - Finance and Education, Energy, and the Environment.

**Information Source(s):** Washington County; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 24, 2025  
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