

SENATE BILL 694

D3, P3

6lr0748

By: Senator Smith

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Human Relations – Violations of County Discrimination Laws – Complaints**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing that filing a certain complaint with the Maryland
4 Commission on Civil Rights satisfies certain prerequisites to commencing a civil
5 action alleging the violation of a county discrimination law; and generally relating
6 to county discrimination laws.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
8 Article – State Government
9 Section 20–1004(a) and (c)
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
13 Article – State Government
14 Section 20–1202 and 20–1203
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – State Government**

20 20–1004.

21 (a) Any person claiming to be aggrieved by an alleged discriminatory act may file
22 a complaint with the Commission.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



4 (ii) A complaint filed with a federal or local human relations
5 commission within 6 months after the date on which the alleged discriminatory act occurred
6 shall be deemed to have complied with subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

10 (ii) A complaint filed with a federal human relations commission
11 within 6 months or a local human relations commission within 300 days shall be deemed
12 to have complied with subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

19 20-1202.

20 (a) This section applies only in Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince
21 George's County.

22 (b) In accordance with this section, a person that is subjected to a discriminatory
23 act prohibited by the county code may bring and maintain a civil action against the person
24 that committed the alleged discriminatory act for damages, injunctive relief, or other civil
25 relief.

26 (c) (1) An action under subsection (b) of this section shall be commenced in the
27 circuit court for the county in which the alleged discriminatory act occurred within 2 years
28 after the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act.

2. THE COMMISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 20-1004

2 OF THIS TITLE.

6 (d) In a civil action under this section, the court may award the prevailing party
7 reasonable attorney's fees, expert witness fees, and costs.

8 20-1203.

9 (a) This section applies only in Baltimore County.

10 (b) In accordance with this section, a person that is employed by an employer with
11 fewer than 15 employees and that is subjected to a discriminatory act prohibited by the
12 county code may bring and maintain a civil action against the employer that committed the
13 alleged discriminatory act for relief as provided under subsection (d) of this section.

14 (c) (1) An action under subsection (b) of this section shall be commenced in the
15 Circuit Court for Baltimore County within 2 years after the occurrence of the alleged
16 discriminatory act.

17 (2) Subject to paragraph (1) of this subsection, an action under subsection
18 (b) of this section may not be commenced sooner than 60 days after the aggrieved person
19 files a complaint with:

20 (I) the county unit responsible for handling violations of the county
21 discrimination laws; OR

22 (II) THE COMMISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 20-1004 OF
23 THIS TITLE

24 (d) (1) In a civil action under this section, the court may award the prevailing
25 party:

26 (i) injunctive relief:

(ii) compensatory damages, including back pay; or

28 (iii) both injunctive relief and compensatory damages.

29 (2) A prevailing party may not be awarded punitive damages under this
30 section.

31 (3) The court may award the prevailing party reasonable attorney's fees.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
2 October 1, 2026.