

**SENATE BILL 694**

D3, P3

6lr0748

---

**By: Senator Smith**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

---

Committee Report: Favorable

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 2, 2026

Returned to second reading: March 3, 2026

Senate action: Adopted with floor amendments

Read second time: March 3, 2026

---

## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

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 BY adding to  
 18 Article – State Government  
 19 Section 20–1204

---

**EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.**

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

1 Annotated Code of Maryland  
2 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

5 **Article – State Government**

6 20–1004.

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

9 (c) (1) (i) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection, a  
10 complaint shall be filed within 6 months after the date on which the alleged discriminatory  
11 act occurred.

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

15 (2) (i) A complaint alleging an unlawful employment practice other  
16 than harassment shall be filed within 300 days after the date on which the alleged  
17 discriminatory act occurred.

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

21 (3) (i) A complaint alleging harassment against an employer shall be  
22 filed within 2 years after the date on which the alleged harassment occurred.

23 (ii) A complaint filed with a federal human relations commission  
24 within 6 months or a local human relations commission within 2 years after the date on  
25 which the alleged harassment occurred shall be deemed to have complied with  
26 subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

27 20–1202.

28 (a) This section applies only in Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince  
29 George’s County.

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

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

4 (2) (i) Subject to paragraph (1) of this subsection, an action under  
5 subsection (b) of this section alleging discrimination in employment or public  
6 accommodations may not be commenced sooner than 45 days after the aggrieved person  
7 files a complaint with:

8 1. the county unit responsible for handling violations of the  
9 county discrimination laws; **OR**

10 2. **THE COMMISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 20-1004**  
11 **OF THIS TITLE.**

12 (ii) Subject to paragraph (1) of this subsection, an action under  
13 subsection (b) of this section alleging discrimination in real estate may be commenced at  
14 any time.

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

17 20-1203.

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

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

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

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

29 (I) the county unit responsible for handling violations of the county  
30 discrimination laws; **OR**

31 (II) **THE COMMISSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 20-1004 OF**  
32 **THIS TITLE.**

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

3 (i) injunctive relief;

4 (ii) compensatory damages, including back pay; or

5 (iii) both injunctive relief and compensatory damages.

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

8 (3) The court may award the prevailing party reasonable attorney’s fees.

9 **20-1204.**

10 **(A) THIS SECTION APPLIES IN ANY COUNTY OTHER THAN BALTIMORE**  
11 **COUNTY, HOWARD COUNTY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, OR PRINCE GEORGE’S**  
12 **COUNTY.**

13 **(B) A COMPLAINT FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 20-1004 OF THIS TITLE**  
14 **SATISFIES ANY REQUIREMENT TO EXHAUST REMEDIES BEFORE FILING A CIVIL**  
15 **ACTION IMPOSED BY A COUNTY OR LOCAL UNIT RESPONSIBLE FOR HANDLING**  
16 **VIOLATIONS OF COUNTY OR LOCAL DISCRIMINATION LAWS.**

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

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House of Delegates.