

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND
LEGISLATIVE SESSION 2025-20**

BILL NO. 2025-10

Title of Bill: Amendments – Cecil County Code – Chapter 39, Ethics – Additions Required by Maryland Legislation

Synopsis: A Bill to amend Cecil County Code – Chapter 39, Ethics, to add updates required under House Bill 279 (2017) Changes and House Bills 363 and 1058 (2021) Required Changes.

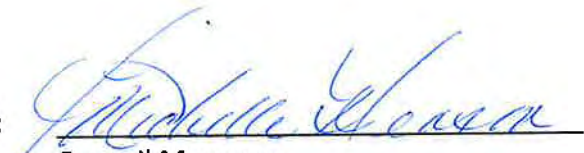
Introduced by: Council President at the request of the County Executive

Introduced and ordered posted on: October 21, 2025

Public Hearing scheduled on: November 18, 2025

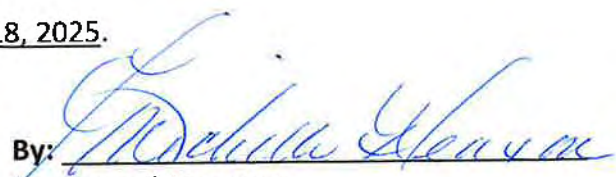
Scheduled for Consideration on: December 2, 2025

By:


Council Manager

Notice of time and place of public hearing and title of Bill having been posted by October 21, 2025 at the County Administrative Building, 200 Chesapeake Blvd, Elkton, and having been published according to the Charter on October 31, 2025, and November 5, 2025, a Public Hearing was held on November 18, 2025 and concluded on November 18, 2025.

By:


Council Manager

Explanation: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING ORDINANCE.
~~Strike through~~ indicate matter deleted from existing ordinance.
Underlining indicates language added by amendment.
~~Double Strike through~~ indicates language deleted by amendment.

1 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County, recognizing that our system of representative government is
2 dependent in part upon the people maintaining the highest trust in their public officials and
3 employees, finds and declares that the people have a right to be assured that the impartiality and
4 independent judgment of public officials and employees will be maintained; and

5 **WHEREAS**, this confidence and trust is eroded when the conduct of the County's business is
6 subject to improper influence and even the appearance of improper influence; and

7 **WHEREAS**, for the purpose of guarding against improper influence, the County has enacted a
8 Public Ethics Law to require County elected officials, officials, employees, and individuals appointed to
9 Boards and Commissions, to disclose their financial affairs and to set minimum standards for the
10 conduct of local government business; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Cecil County elected officials, officials, employees, and individuals uphold the
12 highest standards of Ethics; and

13 **WHEREAS**, the State of Maryland has notified the Cecil County Ethics Commission of certain
14 mandated additions and changes that must be made to the Cecil County Public Ethics Law and of
15 certain additions that are suggested, but not required, to be adopted; and

16 **WHEREAS**, the County now endeavors to amend Chapter 39 to include the required changes
17 required by Maryland Legislation in 2017 by House Bill 279 and in 2021 by House Bills 363 and 1058.

18 **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND,**
19 that Chapter 39, Ethics, of the Cecil County Code, Is hereby amended as follows:

20 **ARTICLE I: GENERAL PROVISIONS**

21 **Section 39-1 Title**

22 This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Cecil County Ethics Law."

23 **Section 39-2 Statement of Purpose and Policy**

24 A. Cecil County, recognizing that our system of representative government is dependent in part
25 upon the people maintaining the highest trust in their public officials and employees, finds and
26 declares that the people have a right to be assured that the impartiality and independent
27 judgment of public officials and employees will be maintained.

28 B. It is evident that this confidence and trust is eroded when the conduct of the County's business
29 is subject to improper influence and even the appearance of improper influence.

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- C. For the purpose of guarding against improper influence, the County enacts this Public Ethics Law to require County elected officials, officials, employees, and individuals appointed to boards and commissions to disclose their financial affairs and to set minimum standards for the conduct of local government business.
- D. It is the intention of the County that this Chapter, except its provisions for criminal sanctions, be liberally construed to accomplish this purpose.

Section 39-3 Definitions

In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

(A) “Business entity” means:

(1) a corporation, general or limited partnership, sole proprietorship, joint venture, unincorporated association or firm, institution, trust, foundation, or other organization, whether or not operated for profit.

(2) Business entity does not include a governmental entity.

(B) “Commission” means the Cecil County Ethics Commission established under section 39-4 of this Chapter.

(C) “Compensation” means:

(1) any money or thing of value, regardless of form, received or to be received by any individual covered by this Chapter from an employer for service rendered.

(2) For the purposes of ~~Article VI~~ Section 39-36 of this Chapter, if lobbying is only a portion of a person’s employment, “compensation” means a prorated amount based on the time devoted to lobbying compared to the time devoted to other employment duties.

(D) “Conflict of Interest” means an actual or potential financial benefit, as distinguished from the general interest of the County or public, related to or resulting from an official’s or employee’s public duties and his/her personal, family, employer, business or investment interests that s/he would reasonably be expected to know, or using one’s position for the private gain of oneself or another.

(E) “Doing Business with” means:

(1) having or negotiating a contract that involves the commitment, either in a single or combination of transactions, of \$5,000 or more of County-controlled funds; or,

(2) being regulated by or otherwise subject to the authority of Cecil County; or,

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(3) being registered as a lobbyist under Article IV of this Chapter.

(F) “Elected Official” means:

(1) any individual who holds an elective office of Cecil County.

(2) Elected Official does not include the Sheriff, State’s Attorney, Register of Wills, or the Clerk of Court.

(G) “Employee” means:

(1) an individual who is employed by Cecil County.

(2) Employee does not include an elected local official.

(3) Employee does not include an employee of the Office of the Sheriff, State’s Attorney, Register of Wills, the Clerk of the Court, the County Health Department or the County Department of Social Services.

(H) “Financial Interest” means:

(1) Ownership of any interest as a result of which the owner has received, within the past three (3) years, or is presently receiving, or in the future is entitled to receive, more than \$1,000 per year; or

(2) Ownership, or the ownership of securities of any kind representing or convertible into ownership, of more than 3% of a business entity by a County Official or employee, or the spouse of an official or employee.

(I) “Gift” means:

(1) The transfer of anything of economic value, regardless of the form, without adequate and lawful consideration.

(2) Gift does not include a political campaign contribution as defined in the Election Article, Annotated Code of Maryland. ~~, or any other provision of state or local law regulating the conduct of elections or the receipt of political campaign contributions.~~

(J) “Immediate Family” means a spouse and dependent children.

(K) “Interest” means:

(1) a legal or equitable economic interest, whether or not subject to an encumbrance or a condition, that is owned or held, in whole or in part, jointly or severally, directly or indirectly.

~~Filers need not disclose exchange traded funds (“ETF”) or a diversified collection of ETF assets (such as, for example, mutual funds) that trade on an exchange (such as, for example, a stock).~~

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(2) for purposes of Articles IV and V of this Chapter, interest includes any interest held at any time during the reporting period.

(3) interest does not include:

(i) an interest held in the capacity of a personal agent, custodian, fiduciary, personal representative, or trustee, unless the holder has an equitable interest in the subject matter;

(ii) an interest in a time or demand deposit in a financial institution;

(iii) an interest in an insurance policy, endowment policy or annuity contract under which an insurer promises to pay a fixed amount of money either in a lump sum or periodically for life or a specified period;

(iv) a common trust fund or a trust which forms part of a pension or profit-sharing plan which has more than 25 participants and which has been determined by the Internal Revenue Service to be a qualified trust under the Internal Revenue Code; or

(v) a college savings plan under the Internal Revenue Code.

(L) “Lobbying” means:

(1) communicating in the presence of a County official or employee with the intent to influence any official action of that official or employee; or

(2) engaging in activities with the express purpose of soliciting others to communicate with a County official or employee with the intent to influence that official or employee.

(M) Lobbyist is a person required to register and report expenses related to lobbying under Article VI of this chapter.

(N) “Official” means an elected official, an employee of Cecil County Government, or a person appointed to or employed by the County or any County agency, Board, Commission, or similar entity;

(1) whether or not paid in whole or in part with County funds; and

(2) whether or not compensated.

(O) “Person” includes an individual or business entity.

(P) “Qualified Relative” means a spouse, parent, child, brother or sister, in-law, or the spouse of a parent, child, sibling, or in-law.

(Q) “Quasi-Governmental Entity” means an entity that is created by State statute, that performs a public function, and that is supported in whole or in part by the State but is managed privately.

ARTICLE II: ETHICS COMMISSION

SECTION 39-4 Membership; terms

- A. There shall be a Cecil County Ethics Commission, ~~which shall be composed of five members. Three members, including the Chair, shall be appointed by the Executive in accordance with Section 412 of the Charter; two of the members shall be appointed by the Council and confirmed by the County Executive. Any veto by the County Executive of a County Council appointment shall be subject to Section 306 of the Charter, which is an independent agency of Cecil County Government that consists of five members.~~
- B. ~~The Commission members shall serve four-year staggered terms. All members shall reside in and be qualified voters of Cecil County.~~ Three members, including the Chair, shall be appointed by the County Executive; two members shall be appointed by the County Council.
- C. ~~Not more than three members of the Commission shall be affiliated with the same political party. The members of the Cecil County Ethics Commission are volunteers and shall serve a four-year staggered term.~~
- D. ~~A Commission member may serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies. No more than three members of the Commission shall be affiliated with the same political party.~~
- E. A Commission member may serve until a successor is appointed and qualified.

SECTION 39-5 (Reserved) CHAIRPERSON

The Chairperson of the Ethics Commission shall be appointed by the County Executive

SECTION 39-6 ROLE OF COUNTY ATTORNEY

- A. The County Attorney shall assist the Commission in carrying out the Commission's duties.
- B. If a conflict of interest under Article III of this Chapter or other conflict prohibits the County Attorney from assisting with the Commission in a matter, the County shall provide sufficient funds for the Commission to hire independent counsel for the duration of the conflict.

SECTION 39-7 BUDGET AND EXPENSES

- A. The Commission, with the assistance of the Director of Administration, shall develop and submit a budget to the County Executive on or before February 1 of each year.
- B. The Commission shall be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred in connection with the work of the Commission.

SECTION 39-8 POWERS AND DUTIES

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- A. The Commission is the advisory body responsible for interpreting this Chapter and advising persons subject to this Chapter regarding its application.
- B. The Commission shall hear and decide, with the advice of the County Attorney or other legal counsel if appropriate, all complaints filed regarding alleged violations of this Chapter by any person.
- C. The Commission or an office designated by the Commission shall retain as a public record all forms submitted by any person under this Chapter for at least four (4) years after receipt by the Commission.
- ~~(1)~~ D. The Commission designates the Cecil County Department of Law, acting as agent of the Ethics Commission, to maintain a file of Commission records and forms, including, but not limited to, all statements of financial disclosure, lobbyist registration statements, lobbyist gift disclosure statements, Ethics Commission advisory opinions, documents relating to an investigation, and all other historical documents. All records shall be made available for review and copying upon request of current Ethics Commission members. Documents not designated as confidential under this Chapter shall be made available for review and copying by the general public, upon request and as permitted by law, subject to reasonable fees and administrative procedures established by the Commission.
- ~~(2)~~ E. Ethics Commission advisory opinions, documents relating to an investigation, and documents designated as confidential under this Chapter may be retired at the approval of the Ethics Commission.
- ~~D.~~ F. The Commission shall conduct a public information and education program regarding the purpose and implementation of this Chapter.
- ~~E.~~ G. The Commission shall certify to the State Ethics Commission on or before October 1 of each year that the County is in compliance with the requirements of State Government Article, Title 15, Subtitle 8, Annotated Code of Maryland, for elected local officials.
- ~~F.~~ H. The Commission shall:
- (1) Determine if changes to this Chapter are required to be in compliance with the requirements of State Government Article, Title 15, Subtitle 8, Annotated Code of Maryland; and
 - (2) Forward any recommended changes and amendments to the County for enactment.

SECTION 39-9 ADVISORY OPINIONS

- A. Any person subject to this Chapter may request an advisory opinion from the Commission concerning the application of this Chapter.
- B. The Commission shall respond promptly to a request for an advisory opinion and shall provide interpretations of this Chapter based on the facts provided or reasonably available to the Commission in an expeditious manner, not to exceed 60 days from the request date.
- C. In accordance with all applicable State and County laws regarding public records, the Commission shall publish or otherwise make available to the public copies of the advisory opinions, with the identities of the subjects deleted, provided content of such disclosure would not otherwise indicate the identity of the subject. Opinions may be released in their entirety if the subject waives confidentiality.
- D. The Commission may adopt additional policies and procedures related to the advisory opinion request process.

SECTION 39-10 COMPLAINTS

Any person may file a complaint with the Commission alleging a violation of any of the provisions of this Chapter.

- A. A complaint shall be in writing and under oath, on a form provided by the Commission. The Commission shall promptly acknowledge receipt of the complaint to the complainant. The Commission shall promptly provide the respondent with a copy of the complaint. The identity of the complainant shall be disclosed to the respondent at the request of the respondent. All Commission members shall receive a copy of the complaint.
- B. The Commission, on its own motion, may issue a complaint alleging a violation of this Chapter.
- C. If the complaint fails to allege a violation of the provisions of the Cecil County Ethics Law, the Commission may dismiss the complaint in a signed order outlining its reason(s) for dismissal. The order of dismissal shall be sent to the complainant and to the respondent forthwith.
- D. In the event the Commission determines that the alleged violation falls within the jurisdiction of the Cecil County Public Ethics Law, the Commission may, at the Commission's discretion, promptly refer the complaint to the County Attorney, or other legal counsel if deemed appropriate, for investigation and review. Counsel, or the Commission, shall collect evidence

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relating to the allegation of the complaint and shall refer an investigative report to the Commission for review.

E. The Commission may dismiss a complaint if, after receiving an investigative report, the Commission determines that there are insufficient facts upon which to base a determination of a violation. The complaint shall be dismissed by the Commission in a signed order outlining its reason(s) for dismissal.

F. If there is a reasonable basis for believing a violation has occurred, the subject of the complaint shall be given an opportunity for a hearing conducted in accordance with the applicable County Rules of Procedure. The Commission shall notify the complainant and the respondent that a hearing will be held on the complaint on a date specified in the written notice.

(1) In lieu of a hearing, if, within 15 days of the notice, the respondent takes any action which may be available to cure all alleged violations, the complaint shall be dismissed in a signed order if the Commission finds such action is not contrary to the purposes of the Cecil County Public Ethics Law.

(2) In preparation for the hearing, the respondent may use the subpoena power of the Commission.

(3) At the hearing, the Commission's counsel shall present to the Commission all the evidence available relating to the complaint. Said counsel may also recommend to the Commission such disposition of the complaint as appears appropriate.

G. A final determination of a violation resulting from the hearing shall include findings of fact and conclusion of law.

H. After a complaint is filed and until a final finding of a violation by the Commission, all actions regarding a complaint are confidential. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law to the contrary, upon the filing of a complaint, and unless and until a finding of violation has been made, the proceedings, meetings, and activities of the Commission and its employees in connection with the complaint shall be conducted in a confidential manner. The Commission, its staff, counsel, the complainant and the respondent shall not disclose any information relating to the complaint, including the identity of the complainant and the respondent,

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except that the Commission may release any information at any time if the respondent has, in writing, agreed to said release.

I. A finding of a violation is public information.

J. All orders, reprimands and recommendations issued by the Commission shall be signed by those members of the Commission taking part therein. ~~and in agreement therewith. If there is a majority, concurring or dissenting action taken, those members in agreement with the particular action taken shall sign such action.~~

K. The Commission may adopt additional policies and procedures related to complaints, complaint hearings, the use of independent investigators and staff, the use of witness and document subpoenas, and settlement agreements.

L. For any purpose consistent with the intent of this Chapter, the Commission has the power to require and administer oaths and to subpoena persons, documents and objects. These subpoenas may be judicially enforced.

M. If the respondent is aggrieved by a final order of the Commission, the respondent may seek judicial review as provided in ~~Title 7, Appellate and Other Review in the Circuit Court, Chapter 200, of~~ by the Maryland Rules of Procedure. ~~(1) Stay pending judicial review. The order is stayed automatically until the time for seeking judicial review has expired.~~

N. ~~(2) The filing of a petition for judicial review: (a) does not automatically stay the enforcement of the Order. (b) Except as otherwise provided by the law, the Commission or the reviewing Court may stay the enforcement of the Order, under terms it considers proper deems appropriate. (c) Judicial relief for the Ethics Commission. The Commission may file a petition for injunctive or other relief in the Circuit Court for Cecil County for the purpose of requiring compliance with the provisions of this chapter.~~

O. The Commission may file a petition for injunctive or other relief in the Circuit Court for Cecil County for the purpose of requiring compliance with the provisions of this Chapter.

SECTION 39-11 EXEMPTIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

The Commission may grant exemptions to or modification of the conflict of interest and financial disclosure provision of this Chapter to officials or employees serving as members of County Boards and Commissions, when the Commission finds that the exemption or modification would not be contrary to the purposes of this Chapter, and the application of this Chapter would:

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(a) Constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy; and/or

(b) Significantly reduce the availability of qualified persons from public service.

SECTION 39-12 LATE FEES

The Commission may:

(a) Assess a late fee of ~~\$2~~ \$5 per day, up to a maximum of ~~\$250~~ \$500, for failure to timely file a financial disclosure statement required under Article IV or V of this Chapter; and

(b) Assess a late fee of \$10 per day, up to a maximum of ~~\$250~~ \$1,000, for failure to file a timely lobbyist registration or lobbyist report required under Article VI of this Chapter.

ARTICLE III: PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND INTERESTS

SECTION 39-13 PARTICIPATION RESTRICTIONS

A. Except as permitted by Commission regulation or opinion, an official or employee, as defined in section 39-3 of this Chapter, may not participate in:

(1) Except in the exercise of an administrative or ministerial duty that does not affect the disposition or decision of the matter, any matter in which, to the knowledge the official or employee, the official or employee, or a qualified relative of the official or employee, has an interest.

(2) Except in the exercise of an administrative or ministerial duty that does not affect the disposition or decision with respect to the matter, any matter in which any of the following is a party:

(a) A business entity in which the official or employee has a direct financial interest of which the official or employee may reasonably be expected to know;

(b) A business entity for which the official or employee, or a qualified relative of the official or employee, is an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee;

(c) A business entity with which the official or employee or, to the knowledge of the official or employee, a qualified relative is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment;

(d) A business entity that is a party to an existing contract with the official or employee, or which, to the knowledge of the official or employee, is a party to a contract with a qualified relative, if the contract reasonably could be expected to result in a conflict

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between the private interests of the official or employee and the official duties of the official or employee;

(e) An entity, doing business with the County, in which a direct financial interest is owned by another entity in which the official or employee has direct financial interest, if the official or employee may be reasonably expected to know of both direct financial interests; or,

(f) A business entity that:

(1) The official or employee knows is a creditor or obligee of the official or employee, or a qualified relative of the official or employee, with respect to a thing of economic value; and,

(2) As a creditor or obligee, is in a position to directly and substantially affect the interest of the official or employee or a qualified relative of the official or employee.

B. A person who is disqualified from participating under subsection A of this section shall disclose the nature and circumstances of the conflict and may participate or act if:

(1) The disqualification leaves a body with less than a quorum capable of acting;

(2) The disqualified official or employee is required by law to act; or,

(3) The disqualified official or employee is the only person authorized to act.

C. The prohibitions of subsection A of this section do not apply if participation is allowed by regulation or opinion of the Commission.

D. A former lobbyist who becomes an official or employee, as defined in section 39-3 of this Chapter, may not participate in a case, contract, or other specific matter for one calendar year after terminating their local lobbying registration if they previously assisted or represented another party in the matter.

E. Should any lobbyist who serves on Cecil County Boards or Commissions be disqualified from participating under subsection A, said lobbyist shall file a statement of recusal with the Board or Commission on which they serve.

SECTION 39-14 EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCIAL INTEREST RESTRICTIONS

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A. Except as permitted by regulation of the Commission when the interest is disclosed or when employment does not create a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict, an official or employee may not:

(1) Be employed by or have a financial interest in any entity:

(a) Subject to the authority of the official or employee or the County agency, Board, or Commission with which the official or employee is affiliated; or,

(b) That is negotiating or has entered a contract with the agency, Board, or Commission with which the official or employee is affiliated; or,

(2) Hold any other employment relationship that would impair the impartiality or independence of judgement of the official or employee.

B. The prohibitions of subsection A of this section do not apply to:

(1) An official or employee who is appointed to a regulatory or licensing authority pursuant to a statutory requirement that persons subject to the jurisdiction of the authority be represented in appointments to the authority;

(2) Subject to other provisions of law, a member of a board or commission in regard to a financial interest or employment held at the time of appointment, provided the financial interest or employment is publicly disclosed to the appointing authority and the Commission;

(3) An official or employee whose duties are ministerial, if private employment or financial interest does not create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, as permitted and in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission;

(4) Employment or financial interest allowed by regulation of the Commission if the employment does not create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest or the financial interest is disclosed; or,

(5) Nonelected board members, committee members and employees, who receive County funds, are not under the direct supervision of the County Executive or County Council.

SECTION 39-15 POST-EMPLOYMENT LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

A. A former official or employee may not assist or represent any party other than the County for compensation in a case, contract, or other specific matter involving the County if that matter

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is one in which the former official or employee significantly participated as an official or employee.

- B. ~~Until the conclusion of the next regular session that begins after the elected official leaves office, a former member of the Cecil County Council or the County Executive may not assist or represent another party for compensation in a matter that is the subject of legislative action.~~ A former member of the Cecil County Council or the County Executive may not assist or represent another party for compensation in a matter that is the subject of legislative action for one calendar year after the elected official leaves office.
- C. Former County officials and employees, as well as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, Treasurer or a member of the General Assembly are precluded from lobbying the County (legislative matters) for one calendar year after leaving office.
- D. An official may not assist or represent another party for compensation in a matter that is the subject of legislative action for one calendar year after the official leaves office.

SECTION 39-16 CONTINGENT COMPENSATION

Except in a judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding, an official or employee may not assist or represent a party for contingent compensation in any matter before or involving the County.

SECTION 39-17 USE OF PRESTIGE OF OFFICE

- A. An official or employee may not intentionally use the prestige of office or public position for the private gain of that official or employee or the private gain of another, including, but not limited to, influencing the award of a local contract to a specific person or entity, initiating a solicitation for a person or entity to retain the compensated services of a particular lobbyist or firm, or using public resources or title to solicit a political contribution regulated in accordance with the Election Law Article, Annotated Code of Maryland and/or the provisions of this Code.
- B. This section does not prohibit the performance of usual and customary constituent services by an elected official without additional compensation.

SECTION 39-18 SOLICITATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

- A. An official or employee may not solicit any gift.

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- 383 B. An official or employee may not directly solicit or facilitate the solicitation of a gift, on behalf
384 of another person, from an individual regulated lobbyist.
- 385 C. An official or employee may not knowingly accept a gift, directly or indirectly, from a person
386 that the official or employee knows or has the reason to know:
- 387 1. Is doing business with or seeking to do business with the County office, agency, Board or
388 Commission with which the official or employee is affiliated;
 - 389 2. Has financial interests that may be substantially and materially affected, in a manner
390 distinguishable from the public generally by the performance or nonperformance of the
391 official duties of the official or employee;
 - 392 3. Is engaged in an activity regulated or controlled by the official or employee's
393 governmental unit; ~~or~~
 - 394 4. Is a lobbyist with respect to matters within the jurisdiction of the official or employee; or,
 - 395 5. Is associated with or acting on behalf of an association that is engaged only in representing
396 counties or municipal corporations.
- 397 D. Notwithstanding subsection C of this section, an official or employee may accept the
398 following:
- 399 1. Meals and beverages consumed in the presence of the donor or sponsoring entity;
 - 400 2. Ceremonial gifts or awards that have insignificant monetary value;
 - 401 3. Unsolicited gifts of nominal value that do not exceed \$20 in cost, or trivial items of
402 informational value;
 - 403 4. Reasonable expenses for food, travel, lodging, and scheduled entertainment of the official
404 or employee at a meeting which is given in return for the participation of the official or
405 employee in a panel or speaking engagement at the meeting;
 - 406 5. Gifts of tickets or free admission extended to an elected official to attend a charitable,
407 cultural, or political event, if the purpose of this gift or admission is a courtesy or
408 ceremony extended to the elected official's office;
 - 409 6. A specific gift or class of gifts that the Commission exempts from the operation of this
410 Section upon a finding in writing, that acceptance of the gift or class of gifts would not be
411 detrimental to the impartial conduct of the business of the County and that the gift is
412 purely personal and private in nature;

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7. Gifts from a person related to the official or employee by blood or marriage, or any other individual who is a member of the household of the official or employee; or

8. Honoraria for speaking to or participating in a meeting, provided that the offering of the honorarium is not related in any way to the official's or employee's official position.

E. Exceptions. An official or employee may not accept a gift specified in subsection D of this section if the gift:

1. would tend to impair impartiality and the independence of judgment of the official or employee receiving the gift;

2. Is of significant value that would give the appearance of impairing the impartiality and independence of judgment of the official or employee; or,

3. Is of significant value that the recipient official or employee believes or has reason to believe is designed to impair the impartiality and independence of judgment of the official or employee.

SECTION 39-19 DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Other than in the discharge of official duties, an official or employee or a former official or employee may not disclose or use confidential information that the official or employee or former official or employee acquired by reason of the official's or employee's public position and that is not available to the public, for the economic benefit of the official or employee or former official or employee or that of another person.

A. An official or employee shall not retaliate against an individual for reporting or participating in an investigation of a potential ethics violation.

SECTION 39-20 PARTICIPATION IN PROCUREMENT

A. An individual or a person who employs an individual who assists a County agency or unit in the drafting of specifications, an invitation for bids or a request for proposals for a procurement may not submit a bid or proposal for that procurement or assist or represent another person directly or indirectly who is submitting a bid or proposal for the procurement.

B. The Commission may establish exemptions from the requirements of this Section for providing descriptive literature, sole-source procurements, and written comments solicited by the procuring agency.

ARTICLE IV: FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE BY ELECTED OFFICIALS AND CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY OFFICE

SECTION 39-21 APPLICABILITY

This article applies to all elected officials and all candidates to be elected officials, and County department heads.

SECTION 39-22 FILING OF STATEMENTS

A. Except as provided in section 39-23 of this article, an elected official, candidate to be an elected official and County department heads shall file the financial disclosure statement required under this section:

1. On a form provided by the Commission;
2. Under oath or affirmation; and,
3. With the Commission.

B. Deadlines for filing statements:

1. An incumbent official shall file a financial disclosure statement annually no later than April 30 of each year for the preceding calendar year.
2. An official who is appointed to fill a vacancy in an office for which a financial disclosure statement is required and who has not already filed a financial disclosure statement shall file a statement for the preceding calendar year within 30 days after appointment.
3. An individual who, other than by reason of death, leaves an office for which a statement is required shall file a statement within 60 days after leaving the office. The statement shall cover:
 - a. The calendar year immediately preceding the year in which the individual left office, unless a statement covering that year has already been filed by the individual; and,
 - b. The portion of the current calendar year during which the individual held the office.

SECTION 39-23 FILING OF STATEMENTS BY CANDIDATES FOR ELECTED OFFICE

A. Except an official who has filed a financial disclosure statement under another provision of this Article for the reporting period, a candidate to be an elected local official shall file a financial disclosure statement each year beginning with the year in which the certificate of candidacy is filed through the year of the election.

B. A candidate to be an elected local official shall file a statement required under this article:

1. In the year the certificate of candidacy is filed, no later than the filing of the certificate of candidacy;

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2. In the year of the election (if the candidate filed a certificate of candidacy in the previous year), on or before the earlier of April 30 or the last day for the withdrawal of candidacy; and,

3. In all other years for which a statement is required, on or before April 30.

C. A candidate to be an elected official:

1. May file the statement required under Subsection B (1) of this Section with the County Clerk or Board of Election Supervisors with the certificate of candidacy or with the Commission prior to filing the certificate of candidacy; and,

2. Shall file the statements required under Subsection B (2) and (3) of this Section with the Commission.

D. If a candidate fails to file a statement required by this Article after eight days' written notice has been provided by the County Clerk or Board of Election Supervisors, the candidate is deemed to have withdrawn the candidacy.

E. The County Clerk or Board of Election Supervisors may not accept any certificate of candidacy unless a statement required under this Article has been filed in proper form.

F. Within 30 days of the receipt of a statement required under this Article, the County Clerk or Board of Election Supervisors shall forward the statement to the Commission, or an office designated by the Commission.

SECTION 39-24 PUBLIC RECORD

A. The Commission or office designated by the Commission shall maintain all financial disclosure statements filed under this Article.

B. The Commission or office designated by the Commission shall make financial disclosure statements available during normal office hours, for examination and copying by the public, subject to reasonable fees and administrative procedures established by the Commission. The Commission may not, however, provide public access to the portion of a financial disclosure statement that includes an individual's home address, email addresses and telephone numbers as identified by the individual (i.e., the Commission must redact the information before making it publicly available). This provision applies to all statements, whether posted on the internet or viewable only in the office.

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- C. If an individual examines or copies a financial disclosure statement, the Commission or the office designated by the Commission shall record:
1. The name and home address of the individual reviewing or copying the statement; and,
 2. the name of the person whose financial disclosure statement was examined or copied.
- D. Upon request by the individual whose financial disclosure statement was examined or copied, the Commission or the office designated by the Commission shall provide the official or employee with a copy of the name and home address of the person who reviewed the official's or employee's financial disclosure statement.
- E. The Commission or office designated by the Commission shall not provide public access to an individual's home address that the individual has designated as the individual's home address.
- F. The Commission or office designated by the Commission shall not provide public access to information related to consideration received from:
1. The University of Maryland Medical System;
 2. A governmental entity of the state or a local government in the state; or,
 3. A Quasi-Governmental Entity of the state or a local government in the state.

SECTION 39-25 RETENTION OF STATEMENT

The Commission or the office designated by the Commission shall retain all financial disclosure statements and ethics records for four years from the date of receipt.

SECTION 39-26 CONTENTS OF STATEMENT

A. Interest in real property.

1. A statement filed under this section shall include a schedule of all interest in real property wherever it is located.

For each interest in real property, the schedule shall include:

- (i) The nature of the property and the location by street address, mailing address, or legal description of the property;
- (ii) The nature and extent of the interest held, including any conditions and encumbrances on the interest;
- (iii) The date when, the manner in which, and the identity of the person from whom the interest was acquired;

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- (iv) The nature and amount of the consideration given in exchange for the interest or, if acquired other than by purchase, the fair market value of the interest at the time acquired;
- (v) If any interest was transferred, in whole or in part, at any time during the reporting period, a description of the interest transferred, the nature and amount of the consideration received for the interest, and the identity of the person to whom the interest was transferred; and,
- (vi) The identity of any other person with an interest in the property.

B. Interest in corporations and partnerships.

1. A statement filed under this section shall include a schedule of all interests in any corporation, partnership, limited liability partnership, or limited liability corporation, regardless of whether the corporation or partnership does business with Cecil County.
2. For each interest reported under this paragraph, the schedule shall include:
 - (i) The name and address of the principal of the corporation, partnership, limited liability partnership, or limited liability corporation;
 - (ii) The nature and amount of interest held, including any conditions and encumbrances on the interest;
 - (iii) With respect to any interest transferred, in whole or in part, at any time during the reporting period, a description of the interest transferred, the nature and amount of the consideration received for the interest, and, if known, the identity of the person to whom the interest was transferred; and,
 - (iv) With respect to any interest acquired during the reporting period:
 - (a) The date when, the manner in which, and the identity of the person from whom the interest was acquired; and,
 - (b) The nature and the amount of consideration given in exchange for the interest or, if acquired other than by purchase, the fair market value of the interest at the time acquired.
 - (c) An individual may satisfy the requirement to report the amount of the interest held under ~~Subsection B(2)(b)~~ items 2 (ii) of this ~~section~~ paragraph by reporting, instead of a dollar amount: for an equity interest in a corporation, the number of

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shares held and, unless the corporation's stock is publicly traded, the percentage of equity interest held; or, for an equity interest in a partnership, the percentage of equity interest held.

C. Interests in business entities doing business with Cecil County.

1. A statement filed under this section shall include a schedule of all interests in any business entity that does business with Cecil County, other than interests reported under ~~Subsection~~ paragraph B of this subsection.
2. For each interest reported under this ~~subsection~~ paragraph, the schedule shall include:
 - ~~(a)~~(i) The name and address of the principal office of the business entity;
 - ~~(b)~~(ii) The nature and amount of the interest held, including any conditions to and encumbrances on the interest;
 - ~~(c)~~(iii) With respect to any interest transferred, in whole or in part, at any time during the reporting period, a description of the interest transferred, the nature and amount of the consideration received in exchange for the interest, and, if known, the identity of the person to whom the interest was transferred; and,
 - ~~(d)~~(iv) With respect to any interest acquired during the reporting period: ~~{1}~~ the date when, the manner in which, and the identity of the person from whom the interest was acquired; and, ~~{2}~~ the nature and the amount of the consideration given in exchange for the interest or, if acquired other than by purchase, the fair market value of the interest at the time acquired.

D. Gifts

1. A statement filed under this Section shall include a schedule of each gift in excess of \$20 in value or a series of gifts totaling \$100 or more received during the reporting period from or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any one person who does business with the County.
2. For each gift reported, the schedule shall include:
 - (i) A description of the nature and value of the gift; and,
 - (ii) The identity of the person from whom, or on behalf of whom, directly or indirectly, the gift was received.

E. Employment with or interests in entities doing business with Cecil County.

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1. A statement filed under this Section shall include a schedule of all offices, directorships and salaried employment by the individual or member of the immediate family of the individual held at any time during the reporting period with entities doing business with Cecil County.
2. For each position reported under this subsection, the schedule shall include:
 - (i) The name and address of the principal office of the business entity;
 - (ii) The title and nature of the office, directorship, or salaried employment held and the date it commenced; and,
 - (iii) The name of each County agency with which the entity is involved as indicated by identifying one or more of the three categories of “doing business” as defined in Section 39-3 of this Chapter.

F. Indebtedness to entities doing business with Cecil County.

1. A statement filed under this ~~article~~ Section shall include a schedule of all liabilities, excluding retail credit accounts, to person doing business with or regulated by Cecil County owed at any time during the reporting period:
 - (i) By the individual; or,
 - (ii) By a member of the immediate family of the individual if the individual was involved in the transaction giving rise to the liability.
2. For each liability reported under this Subsection, the schedule shall include:
 - (i) The identity of the person to whom the liability was owed and the date the liability was incurred;
 - (ii) The amount of the liability owed as of the end of the reporting period;
 - (iii) The terms of payment of the liability and the extent to which the principal amount of the liability was increased or reduced during the year; and,
 - (iv) The security given, if any, for the liability.

G. Employment with Cecil County. A statement filed under this Article shall include schedule of the immediate family members of the individual employed by the County in any capacity at any time during the reporting period.

H. Sources of earned income.

1. A statement filed under this Article shall include a schedule of the name and address of each place of employment and of each business entity of which the individual or a member of the

individual's immediate family was a sole or partial owner and from which the individual or member of the individual's immediate family received earned income, at any time during the reporting period.

2. A minor child's employment or business ownership need not be disclosed if the agency that employs the individual does not regulate, exercise authority over, or contract with the place of employment or business entity of the minor child.

3. If the individual's spouse is a lobbyist regulated by Cecil County, the individual shall disclose the entity that has engaged the spouse for lobbying purposes.

SECTION 39-27 INTERESTS OF PERSON MAKING STATEMENT

For the purposes of sections 39-26 A, B and C of this Chapter, the following interests are considered to be the interests of the individual making the statement:

1. An interest held by a member of the individual's immediate family, if the interest was, at any time during the reporting period, directly or indirectly controlled by the individual.
2. An interest held by a business entity in which the individual held a 30% or greater interest at any time during the reporting period.
3. An interest held by a trust or an estate in which, at any time during the reporting period: ~~(1)~~ the individual held a reversionary interest or was a beneficiary; or, ~~(2)~~ if a revocable trust, the individual as a settlor.

SECTION 39-28 REVIEW AND ENFORCEMENT

The Commission shall review the financial disclosure statement submitted under this Article for compliance with the provisions of this Article and shall notify an individual submitting the statement of any omissions or deficiencies.

The County Ethics Commission may take appropriate enforcement action to ensure compliance with this Article.

ARTICLE V. FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE OF EMPLOYEES AND APPOINTED MEMBERS OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

SECTION 39-29 APPLICABILITY

This Article applies to the following County appointed officials and employees:

- A. All appointed employees and ~~PS positions~~ employees grade 4 108 and above and AND non-PS ~~positions Grade 7 and above~~ whose duties include supervisory responsibilities or having input on

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agency policy, decision making, procurement, or budgetary matters (ex. Supervising other employees or individuals, program management, decisional recommendations, conducting investigations and/or program or unit oversight).

B. All members of Boards and Commissions appointed by the Cecil County Government, including County Attorneys that represent Boards, Commissions, the County Council and the County Executive.

C. All other employees, otherwise exempt from the filing requirements per subsection A, who have, per Article III of this Chapter, an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, including the solicitation or receipt of gifts, that they would reasonably be expected to know.

SECTION 39-30 FILING UNDER OATH

~~A statement filed under this section shall be filed~~ Except as provided in Section 39-29 above, all employees and appointed members of Boards and Commissions shall file a statement consistent with section 39-26 with the Commission under oath or affirmation.

SECTION 39-31 RETROACTIVE GIFT DISCLOSURE

On or before April 30 of each year during which an official or employee holds office, those officials and employees specified in section 39-29 of this article shall file a statement disclosing gifts received during the preceding calendar year from any person who contracts with or is regulated by Cecil County, including the name of the donor of the gift and the approximate retail value at the time of receipt.

SECTION 39-32 ADVANCE DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS

Those officials and employees specified in section 39-29 of this article shall disclose employment and interests that raise conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest in connection with a specific proposed action by the employee or official sufficiently in advance of the action to provide adequate disclosure to the public.

SECTION 39-33 RETROACTIVE DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS

A. In addition to the requirements specified in Sections 39-31 and 39-32 of this Article, those employees meeting the definition in Section 39-29A of this Article and appointed members of Boards and Commissions, ~~shall be required to disclose, on an annual basis for the preceding calendar year, the information specified in § 39-26 of this chapter only with respect to those interests, gifts, compensated positions, and liabilities that may create a conflict, as provided in~~

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~~Article III of this chapter, between the employee's personal interests and the employee's official local duties.~~

- B. Shall be required to disclose, on an annual basis for the preceding calendar year, the information specified in section 39-26 of this chapter only with respect to those interests, gifts, compensated positions, and liabilities that may create a conflict, as provided in Article III of this chapter, between the employee's personal interests and the employee's official local duties.

- ~~B.C.~~ An official or employee shall file a statement required under Sections 39-31 and 39-33 of this Article not later than April 30 of each calendar year during which the official or employee holds office.

SECTION 39-34 MAINTENANCE OF STATEMENTS

The Commission shall maintain all disclosure statements filed under this Article as public records available for public inspection and copying as provided in Sections 39-24 and 39-25 of this Chapter for a period of four years from the date of receipt.

SECTION 39-35 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

All County employees and officials are subject to the prohibited conduct provisions specified in Article III of this Chapter as well as the complaint provisions, procedures, and penalties specified in Article II of this Chapter, whether or not subject to filing requirements.

ARTICLE VI LOBBYING

SECTION 39-36 Applicability

~~A person shall file a lobbying registration statement with the Commission if the person:~~

- A. ~~Personally appears before a County official or employee with the intent to influence that person in the performance of the official duties of the official or employee; and~~ Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section, a person or entity who engages in lobbying as defined in section 39-3 shall file a lobbying registration with the Commission if the person or entity, during the calendar year expends, exclusive of personal travel and subsistence expenses, in excess of \$100.00 in furtherance of this activity.

- ~~B. In connection with the intent to influence expends or reasonably expects to expend in a given calendar year in excess of \$100 on food, entertainment or other gifts for officials or employees of County.~~

The following activities are exempt from regulation under this section:

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- (1) Professional services in drafting bills or in 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;
- (2) Appearances before the Cecil County Council or other legislative body upon 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 Cecil County Council or other legislative body actions;
- (3) appearances before a Cecil County agency upon the specific invitation or 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;
- (4) Appearance 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, and not on behalf of any other entity;
- (5) 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;
- (6) Appearances by an individual before the Cecil County Council or other legislative body at the specific invitation or request of a registered lobbyist if the person performs no other lobbying act and notifies the Cecil County Council or other legislative body that the person or entity is testifying at the request of the lobbyist;
- (7) Appearances by an individual before a government agency at the specific invitation or request of a registered lobbyist if the person or entity performs no other lobbying act and notifies the agency that the person or entity is testifying at the request of the lobbyist;
- (8) 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

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(9) 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. Limited exemption — employer of a lobbyist.

a. A person or entity who compensates one or more lobbyists and who would otherwise be required to register as a lobbyist is not required to file a registration and submit lobbying reports if the person or entity reasonably believes that all expenses incurred in connection with the lobbying activities will be reported by a properly registered person or entity acting on behalf of the person or entity.

b. A person or entity exempted under this subsection becomes subject to this section immediately upon failure of the lobbyist to report any information required under this section.

C. The registration filed under this section shall be filed on or before the later of the beginning of the calendar year in which the person or entity expects to lobby and within five days of first engaging in lobbying activities in the calendar year.

SECTION 39-37 FILING DEADLINE

A. ~~A person shall file~~ The registration filed ~~statement required~~ under this Section ~~article~~ shall be filed on or before the later of ~~January 31 of the calendar year or within five days after first performing an act that requires registration in the~~ beginning of the calendar year in which the person or entity expects to lobby and within five days of first engaging in lobbying activities in the calendar year.

~~B. Former lobbyists who become a public official or County employee (i.e., take a job with the County or elected to County office) are prohibited from participating in a case, contract or other specific matter for one calendar year after terminating their registrations if they previously assisted or represented another party in the matter (a "reverse" postemployment restriction for lobbyists).~~

B. The registration filed under this Article shall be dated and, on a form developed by the Commission and shall include:

i. The lobbyist's full and legal name and permanent address;

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- 765 ii. The name, address, and nature of business of any person or entity on whose behalf
766 the lobbyist acts; and
- 767 iii. The written authorization of any person or entity on whose behalf the lobbyist
768 acts or an authorized officer or agent, who is not the lobbyist, or the person or
769 entity on whose behalf the lobbyist acts;
- 770 (4) A statement of whether the person or entity on whose behalf the lobbyist acts
771 is exempt from registration under Subsection (c) of this Section;
- 772 (5) The identification, by formal designation, if known, of matters on which the
773 lobbyist expects to act;
- 774 (6) Identification of the period of time within a single calendar year during which
775 the lobbyist is authorized to engage in these activities, unless terminated
776 sooner; and
- 777 (7) The full legal signature of the lobbyist and, when appropriate, the person or
778 entity on whose behalf the lobbyist acts or an agent or authorized officer of
779 the person or entity on whose behalf the lobbyist acts.
- 780 C. ~~A lobbyist who is disqualified from participating in a specific matter shall file a statement of~~
781 ~~recusal with the board or commission that he/she serves.~~ shall file a separate registration
782 for each person or entity that has engaged or employed the lobbyist for lobbying purposes.
- 783 D. A lobbyist may terminate the lobbyist's registration by providing written notice to the
784 Commission and submitting all outstanding reports and registrations.
- 785 E. A person or entity may not engage in lobbying activities on behalf of another person or entity
786 for compensation that is contingent upon the passage or defeat of any action by the Cecil
787 County Council or the outcome of any executive action.
- 788 F. Activity report.
- 789 (1) A lobbyist shall file with the Commission or the office designated by the Commission:
- 790 (i) By July 31, one report concerning the lobbyist's lobbying activities covering the
791 period beginning January 1 through June 30; and,
- 792 (ii) By January 31, one report covering the period beginning July 1 through December
793 31.

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(2) A lobbyist shall file a separate activity report for each person or entity on whose behalf the lobbyist acts.

(3) If the lobbyist is not an individual, an authorized officer or agent of the entity shall sign the form.

(4) The report shall include:

(ii) A complete and current statement of the information required to be supplied with the lobbyist's registration form.

(iii) Total expenditures on lobbying activities in each of the following categories:

i. Total compensation paid to the lobbyist;

ii. Office expenses of the lobbyist;

(iv) Professional and technical research and assistance not reported in item (i) of this subparagraph;

(v) Publications which expressly encourage persons to communicate with Cecil County officials or employees;

(vi) Names of witnesses, and the fees and expenses paid to each witness;

(vii) Meals and beverages for Cecil County officials and employees;

(viii) Reasonable expenses for food, lodging, and scheduled entertainment of Cecil County officials or employees for a meeting which is given in return for participation in a panel or speaking engagement at the meeting;

(ix) Other gifts to or for officials or employees or their spouses or dependent children; and,

(x) Other expenses.

G. Special gift report.

(1) (i) With the six-month activity report required under subsection (F) of this section, a lobbyist shall report, except for gifts reported in item (F)(4)(ii)(vii) of this section, gifts from the lobbyist with a cumulative value of \$75 or more during the reporting period to an official, employee, or member of the immediate family of an official or employee.

(ii) The lobbyist shall report gifts under this paragraph regardless of whether the gift was given in connection with lobbying activities.

(2) The report shall include the date, beneficiary, amount or value, and nature of the gift.

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H. Notification to official and confidentiality.

- a. If any report filed under this Section contains the name of an official or employee or a member of the immediate family of an official or employee, the Commission shall notify the official or employee within 30 days.
- b. The Commission shall keep the report confidential for 60 days following receipt by the Commission.
- c. Within 30 days of the notice required under paragraph (1) of this Subsection, the official or employee may file a written exception to the inclusion in the report of the name of the official, employee, or member of the immediate family of the official or employee.

I. The Commission may require a lobbyist to submit other reports the Commission determines to be necessary.

J. The Commission or office designated by the Commission shall maintain all registrations and reports filed under this section.

K. (1) The Commission shall review the registrations and reports filed under this Section for compliance with this Section and shall notify persons engaging in lobbying activities of any omissions or deficiencies.

(2) The Commission may take appropriate enforcement action to ensure compliance with this section.

L. Annual report.

- a. The Commission shall compute and make available a subtotal under each of the ten required categories in Subparagraph (h)(4) (ii) of this section.
- b. The Commission shall compute and make available the total amount reported by all lobbyists for their lobbying activities during the reporting period.

M. The Commission shall make lobbying registrations and reports available during normal business hours for examination and copying subject to reasonable fees and procedures established by the Commission.

SECTION 39-38 ~~registration statement~~ ENFORCEMENT

~~A. The registration statement shall identify:~~

~~(1) the registrant;~~

~~(2) any other person on whose behalf the registrant acts; and~~

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- ~~(3) the subject matter on which the registrant proposes to make appearances specified in § 39-36 of this article.~~
- ~~B. The registration statement shall cover a defined registration period not to exceed one calendar year.~~
- ~~C. For a statement filed on or after January 1, 2019, if the filer's spouse is a regulated lobbyist, then the filer must disclose the entity that has engaged the filer's spouse to lobby.~~
- A. Upon a finding of a violation of any provision of this Chapter, the Commission may:
- (1) Issue an order of compliance directing the respondent to cease and desist from the violation;
 - (2) Issue a reprimand; or
 - (3) Recommend to the appropriate authority other appropriate discipline of the respondent, including censure or removal if that discipline is authorized by law.
- B. If the Commission finds that a respondent has violated Article VI of this Chapter, the Commission may:
- (1) Require a respondent who is a registered lobbyist to file any additional reports or information that is reasonably related to the information that is required under §8 of this Chapter;
 - (2) Impose a fine not exceeding \$5,000 for each violation; and
 - (3) Suspend the registration of an individual registered lobbyist if the Commission finds that the lobbyist has knowingly and willfully violated §8 of this chapter or has been convicted of a criminal offense arising from lobbying activities.
- C. Upon request of the Commission, the County Attorney may file a petition for Injunctive or other relief in the Circuit Court of Cecil County, or in any other court having proper venue for the purpose of requiring compliance with the provisions of this chapter.
- D. (i) The Court may:
- (a) Issue an order to cease and desist from the violation;
 - (b) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, void an official action taken by an official or employee with a conflict of interest prohibited by this Chapter when the action arises from or concerns the subject matter of the conflict and if the legal

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action is brought within 90 days of the occurrence of the official action, if the Court
deems voiding the action to be in the best interest of the public; or

(c) Impose a fine of up to \$5,000 for any violation of the provisions of this Chapter, with
each day upon which the violation occurs constituting a separate offense.

(ii) A Court may not void any official action appropriating public funds, levying taxes, or
providing for the issuance of bonds, notes, or other evidence of public obligations.

E. (1) Any person who knowingly and willfully violates the provisions of §8 of this Chapter is
guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000
or imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both.

a. If the person is a business entity and not a natural person, each officer and partner of
the business entity who knowingly authorized or participated in the violation is guilty
of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, is subject to the same penalties as the business
entity.

F. In addition to any other enforcement provisions in this Chapter, a person who the Commission
or a Court finds has violated this chapter:

(1) Is subject to termination or other disciplinary action; and

(2) May be suspended from receiving payment of salary or other compensation pending
full compliance with the terms of an order of the Commission or a Court.

G. (1) A person who is subject to the provisions of this Chapter shall obtain and preserve all
accounts, bills, receipts, books, papers, and documents necessary to complete and
substantiate a report, statement, or record required under this Chapter for three years from
the date of filing the report, statement, or record.

a. These papers and documents shall be available for inspection upon request by the
Commission after reasonable notice.

SECTION 39-39 ~~Disclosure requirements.~~ MAINTENANCE OF REGISTRATIONS AND REPORTS

~~Within 31 days after the end of any calendar year during which a person was registered under this article,
the person shall file a report with the Commission disclosing:~~

~~A. The value, date, and nature of any food, entertainment or other gift provided to a County
official or employee; and~~

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~~B. If a single gift in excess of \$20 in value or a series of gifts totaling \$50 or more is given to a single official or employee, the identity of the official or employee~~

~~The Commission shall maintain the registrations and reports filed under this Article as public records available for public inspection and copying for four years after receipt by the Commission.~~

SECTION 39-40 Maintenance of registrations and reports. SEVERABILITY

~~The Commission shall maintain the registrations and reports filed under this article as public records available for public inspection and copying for four years after receipt by the Commission.~~

If any section, sentence, clause, or phrase of this Chapter is held invalid or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, the ruling shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Chapter.

ARTICLE VI ENFORCEMENT**SECTION 39-41 AUTHORIZED ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS**

A. Upon finding a violation of any provisions of this Chapter, the Commission may:

(1) Issue an order of compliance directing the respondent to cease and desist from the violation;

(2) Issue a reprimand;

(3) Recommend to the appropriate authority disciplinary or other personnel action, including censure, dismissal, suspension, and suspension of salary or other compensation of the respondent if that discipline is authorized by law; or

(4) Refer the matter to the State's Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution.

B. If the Commission finds that a respondent has violated Article VI of this Chapter, the Commission may:

(1) Require a respondent who is a registered lobbyist to file any additional reports or information that reasonably related to the information that is required under Article VI of this Chapter;

(2) Impose a fine not exceeding \$5,000 for each violation; and

(3) Suspend the registration of an individually registered lobbyist if the Commission finds that the lobbyist has knowingly and willfully violated Article VI of this Chapter or has been convicted of a criminal offense arising from lobbying activities.

SECTION 39-42 INJUNCTIVE OR OTHER RELIEF

Upon request of the Commission:

- A. The County Attorney may file a petition for Injunctive or other relief in the Circuit Court of Cecil County, or in any other court having proper venue for the purpose of requiring compliance with the provisions of this Chapter.
- B. The court may:
 - (1) Issue an order to cease and desist from the violation;
 - (2) Except as provided in Subsection C of this Section, void an official action taken by an official or employee with a conflict of interest prohibited by this Chapter when the action arises from or concerns the subject matter of the conflict and if the legal action is brought within 90 days of the occurrence of the official action, if the Court deems voiding the action to be in the best interest of the public; or
 - (3) Impose a fine of up to \$5,000 for any violation of the provisions of this Chapter, with each day upon which the violation occurs constituting a separate offense.
- C. A Court may not void any official action appropriating public funds, levying taxes, or providing for the issuance of bonds, notes, or other evidences of public obligations.

SECTION 39-43 LOBBYING VIOLATIONS

- A. Any person who knowingly and willfully violates the provisions of Article VI of this Chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, is subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.
- B. If the person is a business entity and not a natural person, each officer and partner of the business entity who knowingly authorized or participated in the violation is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, is subject to the same penalties as the business entity.

SECTION 39-44 ADDITIONAL ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

In addition to any other enforcement provisions in this Chapter, a person who the Commission or a Court finds has violated this Chapter:

- A. Is subject to termination or other disciplinary action; and
- B. May be suspended from receiving payment of salary or other compensation pending full compliance with the terms of an order of the Commission or a Court.

SECTION 39-45 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Amendments – Cecil County Code – Chapter 39, Ethics

Additions Required by Maryland Legislation

971 A. A person who is subject to the provisions of this Chapter shall obtain and preserve all
972 accounts, bills, receipts, books, papers, and documents necessary to complete and substantiate
973 a report, statement, or record required under this Chapter for three years from the date of
974 filing the report, statement, or record.

975 B. These papers and documents shall be available for inspection upon request by the
976 Commission or the County after reasonable notice.

977 **SECTION 39-46 FALSIFYING FILED STATEMENTS**

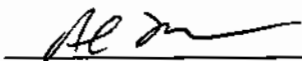
978 In addition to the other violations set forth herein, it shall be a violation of this Chapter to falsify any
979 statement, complaint or document required to be filed by this Chapter or under the Rules of Procedure
980 adopted pursuant hereto.

981 **BE IT FURTHER ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND,** that the
982 foregoing recitals are adopted as if fully rewritten herein.

983 **BE IT FURTHER ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND** that this
984 Bill shall take effect 60 calendar days from the date that it becomes law.

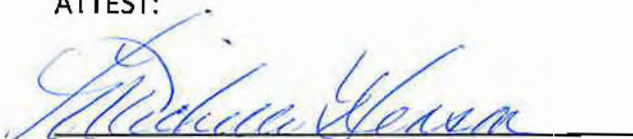
INTRODUCED: October 21, 2025

ADOPTED: December 2, 2025



President of the Council

ATTEST:

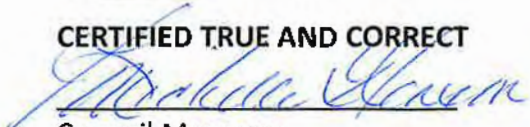


Council Manager

BILL NO: 2025-10

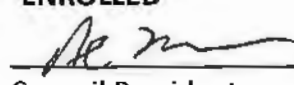
Title of Bill:

CERTIFIED TRUE AND CORRECT


Council Manager

Date: December 2, 2025

ENROLLED


Council President

Date: December 2, 2025

BY THE COUNCIL

Read the third time.

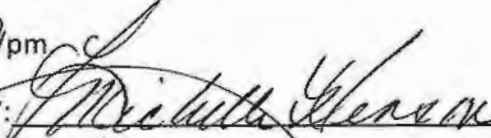
Passed – LSD 2025-23

Failed of Passage – LSD _____

BY: _____
Council Manager

SEALED WITH THE COUNTY SEAL AND PRESENTED TO THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE for approval this

3rd day of DEC., 2025 at 10:00 am/pm
(10 business days from adoption per Charter 306)

BY: 
Council Manager

BY THE EXECUTIVE:


Cecil County Executive

APPROVED Date: 12/03/2025

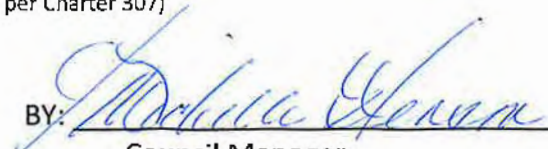
VETOED Date: _____
(10 business days from presentation per Charter 306)



BY THE COUNCIL

Bill No. 2025-10 having been approved by the Executive and returned to the Council becomes law on

December 2, 2025 with an effective date of January 31, 2026
(60 calendar days after enactment unless otherwise specified per Charter 307)

BY: 
Council Manager