



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

COUNTY COUNCIL

To: County Council

From: Council Member Jessica Fitzwater

Date: December 8, 2020

Subject: Commission on Immigrant Affairs

Issue:

Should the Frederick County Council amend Chapter 1-2, Article XV of the Frederick County Code to create a Commission on Immigrant Affairs?

Background:

Frederick County has welcomed an increasingly diverse population and recognizes the importance of cultivating a culture of inclusion. Based on the latest census data (2014-2018), the Frederick County population includes 10.6% of individuals who are foreign-born, or approximately 27,500 people. These numbers represent community members from many different countries of origin who work across all sectors and professions in Frederick County. The unique voices, opportunities, and challenges of our immigrant population need representation and support within Frederick County government.

Other local governments are recognizing this need as well. In May of 2020, Anne Arundel County created a Commission on Immigrant Affairs to recognize and celebrate their growing immigrant population. Montgomery County has a much more formal resource for the immigrant community called The Charles W. Gilcrest Immigrant Resource Center which is part of the County's Office for Community Partnerships and is staffed by professional County staff.

As we move through the COVID-19 pandemic and recognize the disproportionate health and economic impacts on different sections of our community, this effort becomes more important. If Frederick County government wants to ensure well-being and recovery in our County we need to consider intentional and thoughtful communication strategies to reach our diverse immigrant community.

The public health, safety, and general welfare of Frederick County will be furthered by promoting access by all residents to County programs, services, and activities.

What will the new bill do?

This bill will create a commission that will serve as an advisory body for immigrant voices to be heard and understood. The commission will facilitate civic engagement among immigrants while recognizing the issues immigrants face when arriving and living in Frederick County.

The commission will serve as a conduit between immigrant voices and County government. The commission will be charged with advising the County Executive and Council on ways to improve



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immigrant access to County services, strengthen opportunities for immigrants to participate in civic life, and provide outreach from and community feedback to the County. The commission will also make recommendations for existing or proposed policies and actions for their impact on immigrants and assess, research, and compile data related to immigrant affairs in Frederick County.

Members of the commission will include representatives from agencies such as Citizen Services, the Health Department, and law enforcement. Community-based organizations that serve immigrants will also be included as well as immigrant voices from various sectors, including the faith-based and business communities. The bill also requires that a staff person be assigned to assist and support the commission. This is similar to the Veteran's Advisory Council which has a part-time staff member whose role is to support the VAC.



Bill No. _____

Concerning: Commission on Immigrant Affairs

Introduced: _____

Revised: _____ Draft No. _____

Enacted: _____

Effective: _____

Expires: _____

Frederick County Code, Chapter 1-2, Article XV

Section(s) 500

COUNTY COUNCIL FOR FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Council Member Jessica Fitzwater

AN ACT to: establish a Commission on Immigrant Affairs.

Executive: _____ Date Received: _____

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Vetoed: _____ Date: _____

By amending:

Frederick County Code, Chapter, 1-2, Article XV Section(s) 500

Other: _____

Boldface

Underlining

[Single boldface brackets]

* * *

Heading or defined term.

Added to existing law.

Deleted from existing law.

Existing law unaffected by bill.

Bill No. _____

The Frederick County Council finds it necessary and appropriate to create a Commission on Immigrant Affairs. Immigrants make significant contributions to every facet of the County's economic, educational, and cultural life. The public health, safety, and general welfare of the County will be furthered by promoting access by all residents to County programs, services, and activities. Frederick County has welcomed an increasingly diverse population and recognizes the importance of cultivating a culture of inclusion.

Frederick County ensures that all people in the County receive equal protection under the laws and respectful treatment without regard to confirmed or suspected race, color, religion or creed, sex, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or physical or mental disability.

Frederick County government seeks to maintain positive relationships with members of the immigrant community, and seeks guidance on policies, practices, and services that impact immigrant health, well-being, economic success, and safety.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Frederick County Code be, and it is hereby, amended as shown on the attached Exhibit 1.

M.C. Keegan-Ayer, President
County Council of Frederick County,
Maryland

CHAPTER 1-2: ADMINISTRATION

ARTICLE XV. COMMISSION ON IMMIGRATION AFFAIRS

§1-2-500. Creation, Duties.

- (A) There shall be a Frederick County Commission on Immigrant Affairs (hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”).
- (B) The Commission shall act as an advisory body that serves as a means for immigrant voices to be heard and understood, facilitates civic engagement among immigrants, and recognizes and legitimizes issues of importance to immigrants arriving and living in Frederick County.
- (C) Among its powers and duties, the Commission shall:
- a. Advise the County Executive and County Council on ways to enhance and improve immigrant access to County services and resources; strengthen opportunities for immigrants to participate in civic life; encourage dialogue and understanding among immigrant communities and the non-immigrant community; advocate on behalf of immigrants; and provide outreach from and community feedback to the County Executive and County Council.
 - b. Monitor, analyze, and make recommendations for existing or proposed policies and actions, at all levels of government, for their impact on immigrants.
 - c. Assess, research, and compile data related to immigrant affairs in Frederick County, including:
 - i. addressing immigrant needs and concerns;
 - ii. bringing immigrant communities together for the purpose of collective engagement;
 - iii. access to and delivery of services and information tailored to immigrants;
 - iv. immigrant awareness of civil rights protections and related laws and;
 - v. economic and workforce development opportunities for immigrants.
- (D) On or before July 1 of each year, the Commission shall submit an annual report to the County Executive and County Council. The report should include assessment findings and recommendations as identified above.

Underlining indicates entirely new matter added to existing law.

[Single boldface brackets] indicates matter deleted from existing law.

*** - indicates existing law unaffected by bill

§1-2-501. Composition.

- (A) Subject to the confirmation of the County Council, the County Executive must appoint the following individuals to serve on the Commission for a three-year term unless otherwise noted:
- a. Two immigrants residing in the County who are not representatives of an organization;
 - b. Two representatives of the business community who are immigrants;
 - c. Two representatives of community-based organizations serving immigrant populations in the County;
 - d. Two representatives of a faith-based organization who are immigrants;
 - e. One attorney with experience in immigration law;
 - f. One representative from a law enforcement agency in the County;
 - g. One representative from the County Citizen Services Division;
 - h. One representative of Frederick County Public Schools;
 - i. One representative of Frederick Community College;
 - j. One representative from the Frederick County Health Department;
 - k. A member of the County Council;
 - l. A member of the City of Frederick Board of Alderman; and
 - m. One student member with a demonstrated interest in immigrant affairs to serve a one-year term on the Commission. The student's term may be extended for one year. The student member must be a high school or college student who resides in the County when initially appointed.

§1-2-502. Terms, Reappointments, Vacancies.

- (A) Members may be reappointed, but may not serve more than two full consecutive 3-year terms.
- (B) Vacancies shall be filled on the same basis as the original appointments for the unexpired terms. Members shall continue in office until their successors are appointed and qualified.

§1-2-503. Chair, Vice-Chair.

- (A) The Commission must elect a chair and vice-chair from among its members to serve 2-year terms.

Underlining indicates entirely new matter added to existing law.
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§1-2-504. Meetings and Quorum.

- (A) The Commission shall meet with the frequency it determines necessary to perform its functions but there shall be no less than six meetings annually.
- (B) A majority of the Commission members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of regular business.
- (C) Any voting members of the Commission who fail to attend at least 50% of the meetings during any period of 12 consecutive months shall be considered to have resigned. Subject to confirmation by the County Council, the County Executive shall appoint a replacement.

§1-2-505. Rules and Regulations.

The Commission shall adopt rules to govern its procedures and activities.

§1-2-506. Compensation.

Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services.

§1-2-507. County Staff.

A County staff member shall be designated by the County Executive to assist and support the Commission.

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