

Council Bill 9-2017

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

What does Council Bill 9-2017 do?

This legislation protects county residents by establishing Howard County as a Sanctuary County. This means County employees, including police officers, would not inquire about one's immigration status or assist in the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

Would CB9-2017 prevent undocumented immigrants from being deported?

No. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the federal agency responsible for enforcement of federal immigration law, including any potential deportation. This legislation, if passed, would not alter or impede that authority.

Local law enforcement is here to keep our community safe, not to use our local resources to assist the federal government with immigration enforcement.

Would CB9-2017 protect undocumented immigrants from criminal prosecution?

No. This bill does not provide any form of protection or leniency for any form of criminal activity.

This bill would not shield any individual, undocumented or otherwise, from prosecution of any kind. It would simply allow our County police to stay focused on local public safety rather than using local resources to enforce federal immigration laws, which is the responsibility of ICE.

Why do we need this legislation?

This bill is an important statement of our values as a community.

Unfortunately, given the recent national political climate and increased incidents of hate speech and violence across the country, many residents of Howard County fear for their personal safety and the loss of civil liberties.

We must proactively reaffirm our commitment to be a community free of prejudice, bigotry, and hate.

This bill is also an important public safety measure.

It is critically important to our public safety that all victims and witnesses of crime in our community feel comfortable coming forward to law enforcement to share information without fear of potential detention or deportation.

We must make it explicitly clear to all Howard County residents, regardless of their immigration status, that local law enforcement is here to keep our community safe, not to assist the federal government with immigration enforcement.

Fear of deportation is often a reason why victims of domestic violence and human trafficking don't seek assistance. We must use every tool we can to help break down that barrier.

This bill makes Howard County stronger and safer for all of us.

Would Howard County be violating federal law if CB9-2017 is adopted?

No. This bill does not break any laws, nor does it condone breaking any laws.

Howard County must uphold and comply with all federal laws. This bill does nothing to change that. However, Howard County is not responsible for administering or enforcing federal law.

This bill would establish clear public policy that, here in Howard County, we will not dedicate our local resources to aid ICE in a pipeline to deportation.

I heard this was already the Police Department's policy, so what difference would this law make?

CB9-2017 is consistent with past practices in the Police Department. However, given the recent national political climate and increased incidents of hate speech and violence across the country, fear is growing in many minority communities, especially among undocumented immigrants. It is important that this policy be codified in law to increase public awareness of and confidence in the policy and to ensure that the policy cannot be reversed without a public legislative process.

What are the next steps?

This will be a public legislative process with important dates below:

- *Tuesday, January 17, at 6:00 pm:
Legislative Public Hearing*
- *Monday, January 23, at 4:30 pm:
Legislative Work Session (tentative)*
- *Monday, February 6, at 7:00 pm:
Legislative Session*

All meetings will be held at the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City.

How can I weigh in on this legislation?

To sign-up in advance to testify at the public hearing, go online:

<https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/otestimony/>

Public testimony will be accepted electronically up until the Council votes and can be submitted to:

councilmail@howardcountymd.gov.

Written testimony can also be mailed to:

*Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043*

To view Council sessions online, go to:

<http://cc.howardcountymd.gov/Online-Tools/Watch-Us>