



Howard County Council

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Councilman Calvin Ball and Councilwoman Jen Terrasa Respond to Statement by Executive Kittleman Regarding CB-9

Ellicott City, MD (January 10, 2017) – We are disappointed that Executive Kittleman has already made a decision to veto CB9-2017 before hearing and considering the full public discussion of such an important issue.

If Mr. Kittleman had taken the time to listen to the full community conversation about these issues, he may have heard stories from some of Howard County's own DACA students of how they live in fear. He may have heard about the victims of domestic violence who are afraid to call the police, file a report, or request assistance because they fear deportation. He may have come to understand that this legislation is not only about protecting undocumented immigrants, but also about protecting their U.S. citizen children who won't be able to recognize the full benefits of growing up in a community like Howard County if their parents are afraid to engage with the County or the school system. He may have come to understand that this legislation is also about protecting immigrants who came to this country legally and are still living in fear due to the hateful rhetoric that has dominated our recent national discourse...afraid that their legal immigration status will be questioned, challenged on some technicality, or perhaps simply ignored based on the color of their skin, their accent, or the way they dress.

Executive Kittleman's statement reflects some unfortunate misinformation and some fundamental misunderstandings both of the legislation itself and of the realities our immigrant neighbors face.

Mr. Kittleman claims that CB9-2017 provides a "false sense of security" because it will not protect undocumented immigrants from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and cannot prevent immigrants from being deported. Many undocumented immigrants live with the fear of potential deportation every single day. It is part of their reality. They are well aware that their County Council cannot protect them from ICE. To suggest that immigrants don't understand what this legislation would do is incredibly insulting and demeaning.

Mr. Kittleman also claims that CB9-2017 will compromise our ability to keep our community safe when quite the contrary is true. This bill is in fact a 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, human trafficking, and other crimes don't seek assistance. We must use every tool we can to help break down those barriers. In doing so, CB9-2017 will make Howard County stronger and safer for all of us.

In Mr. Kittleman's own press statement about his plans to veto CB9-2017, he noted that this bill will not supersede any federal or state law, or any existing agreement between the County and any other federal, state or local government. Therefore, it does nothing to jeopardize existing cooperation from ICE in targeting criminal activity within Howard County. If it is true that the Howard County Police Department "has never been engaged in the enforcement of immigration laws," merely codifying existing Police Department policy and practice will most certainly not "compromise public safety efforts" as claimed.

Some have suggested that the Police Department already follows the policy which CB9-2017 would codify to try to make the point that this legislation is unnecessary. Mr. Kittleman told the Baltimore Sun, "It would be different if there was a problem." There is a problem. The hate-filled, anti-immigrant rhetoric which dominated the presidential campaign have helped create stifling levels of fear within portions of our community. There is a very real problem, and we can do something about it.

Policies not to enforce federal immigration law do very little to promote confidence among undocumented immigrants unless those policies are widely known and unless people can trust that those policies will not be reversed without a public process. CB9-2017 sends a clear public message that residents of any immigration status can participate safely in all aspects of County life and ensures that the County will not reverse that policy in the future, at least not without a public legislative process.

The Executive also raised concerns that CB9-2017 would jeopardize federal funding. Currently, CB9-2017 would have no fiscal impact. While we cannot predict what the funding priorities of the incoming federal Administration will be, we do not believe local policy decisions should be driven by anticipating federal retribution. These vague threats should not have a chilling effect on our community values. We can and will deal with actual conditions placed on real federal dollars once there is a policy in place to which we can respond.

While it would appear the County Executive has already made a final decision on this matter, we hope that he will take the time to listen to our residents, consider our values as a community, and reconsider his decision. It is a time to stand by the values that make Howard County the best place to live and make sure it is a great place for all of our neighbors.

View Ball and Terrasa's CB 9-2017 FAQs on the following pages.

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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>