

PROPOSED

COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Legislative Session 2026, Legislative Day No. 14

Bill No. 59-26

Introduced by Mr. Volke

By the County Council, July 6, 2026

Introduced and first read on July 6, 2026
Public Hearing set for September 8, 2026
Bill Expires on October 9, 2026

By Order: Kaley Schultze, Administrative Officer

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning: Public Ethics – Conflicts of Interest – County Council

2
3 FOR the purpose of amending the definition of “legislative action”; defining
4 “participation”; expanding the types of presumed conflicts of interest that would
5 prohibit a Councilmember from participating in legislative action to include
6 Councilmembers and their immediate family members; and generally relating to public
7 ethics.
8

9 BY renumbering: § 7-1-101(20) through (26) to be § 7-1-101(21) through (27),
10 respectively
11 Anne Arundel County Code (2005, as amended)
12

13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments: §§ 7-1-101(16); 7-5-110(a)(1) and (c);
14 and 7-5-111(a)(1)
15 Anne Arundel County Code (2005, as amended)
16

17 BY adding: § 7-1-101(20)
18 Anne Arundel County Code (2005, as amended)
19

20 SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the County Council of Anne Arundel County, Maryland,*
21 *That § 7-1-101(20) through (26), respectively, of the Anne Arundel County Code (2005,*
22 *as amended) is hereby renumbered to be § 7-1-101(21) through (27), respectively.*
23

24 SECTION 2. *And be it further enacted,* That Section(s) of the Anne Arundel County
25 Code (2005, as amended) read as follows:

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate new matter added to existing law and taglines.
[[Brackets]] indicate matter deleted from existing law and taglines.
Captions and taglines in **bold** in this bill are catchwords and are not law.
Asterisks *** indicate existing Code provisions in a list or chart that remain unchanged.

ARTICLE 7. PUBLIC ETHICS

TITLE 1. IN GENERAL

7-1-101. Definitions.

In this article, the following words have the meanings indicated unless a different definition is adopted for a particular provision or the context clearly requires a different meaning.

(16) “Legislative action” means an official action or inaction relating to a bill, resolution, amendment, nomination, appointment, report, or other matter within the jurisdiction of the County Council or to an ordinance or resolution presented to the County Executive for signature or veto. “Legislative action” includes DRAFTING, introduction, sponsorship, consideration, debate, amendment, passage, defeat, approval, and veto.

(20) “PARTICIPATION” MEANS GIVING ADVICE OR RECOMMENDATIONS, PROVIDING INFORMATION OR SUPERVISION, MAKING EVALUATIONS, HAVING PUBLIC OR PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS, OR ANY OTHER TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT THAT MAY HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE DISPOSITION OR DECISION IN A MATTER.

TITLE 5. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

7-5-110. Legislative acts of members of County Council.

(a) **Definition.** In this section, “close economic association” means:

(1) ~~[[a Councilmember's]]~~ THE employers, employees, and associates in business or professional enterprises, INCLUDING AN EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION AS DEFINED BY § 6-4-101(6) OF THIS CODE, AN EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE AS DEFINED BY § 6-4-101(7) OF THIS CODE, AND A UNIFORMED PUBLIC SAFETY EXCLUSIVE REPRESENTATIVE AS DEFINED BY § 6-4-101(16) OF THIS CODE, OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER’S IMMEDIATE FAMILY;

(c) **Presumed conflicts of interest.** It shall be presumed that an interest disqualifies a County Councilmember from participating in legislative action ~~[[in any of the following circumstances]]~~ IF:

(1) ~~[[having or acquiring]]~~ THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER’S IMMEDIATE FAMILY HAS OR ACQUIRES an interest in an enterprise that would be affected by the Councilmember's vote on proposed legislation unless the interest is common to all members of:

(i) a profession or occupation of which the COUNTY Councilmember OR A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER’S IMMEDIATE FAMILY is a member; or

(ii) the general public or a large class of the general public;

1 (2) ~~[[benefiting]]~~ THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY
2 COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY BENEFITS financially from a close economic
3 association with a person whom the Councilmember knows has an interest in an enterprise
4 or interest which would be affected by the Councilmember's participation in legislative
5 action, differently from other like enterprises or interests;
6

7 (3) ~~[[benefiting]]~~ THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY
8 COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY BENEFITS financially from a close economic
9 association with a person who is lobbying or has employed a lobbyist for the purpose of
10 influencing legislative action;
11

12 (4) ~~[[soliciting, accepting, or agreeing]]~~ THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR A
13 MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY SOLICITS, ACCEPTS OR
14 AGREES to accept a gift, or loan other than a loan from a commercial lender in the normal
15 course of business, from a person who would be affected by or has an interest in an
16 enterprise that would be affected by the Councilmember's participation in legislative
17 action; or
18

19 (5) ~~[[any of the restrictions set forth in § 7-5-101.]]~~ THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER
20 OR A QUALIFYING RELATIVE OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER HAS AN INTEREST IN THE
21 MATTER DISTINGUISHABLE FROM THAT OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND THE
22 COUNCILMEMBER KNOWS OF THE INTEREST OR IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IS A PARTY TO
23 THE MATTER:
24

25 (I) A BUSINESS ENTITY IN WHICH THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR A
26 MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY HAS A FINANCIAL
27 INTEREST OF WHICH THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER REASONABLY MAY BE EXPECTED TO
28 KNOW;
29

30 (II) A BUSINESS ENTITY OF WHICH THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR, IF
31 KNOWN TO THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER, A QUALIFYING RELATIVE OF THE COUNTY
32 COUNCILMEMBER IS AN OFFICER, DIRECTOR, TRUSTEE, PARTNER, LIMITED PARTNER,
33 MEMBER, OR EMPLOYEE;
34

35 (III) A BUSINESS ENTITY WITH WHICH THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR, IF
36 KNOWN TO THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER, A QUALIFYING RELATIVE OF THE COUNTY
37 COUNCILMEMBER HAS APPLIED FOR A POSITION, IS NEGOTIATING EMPLOYMENT, OR HAS
38 ARRANGED PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYMENT;
39

40 (IV) A BUSINESS ENTITY THAT IS A PARTY TO A CONTRACT WITH THE COUNTY
41 COUNCILMEMBER OR, IF KNOWN TO THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER, A QUALIFYING
42 RELATIVE OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER WHEN THE CONTRACT REASONABLY
43 COULD BE EXPECTED TO RESULT IN A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PRIVATE INTEREST AND
44 THE OFFICIAL COUNTY DUTIES OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER;
45

46 (V) A BUSINESS ENTITY EITHER ENGAGED IN A TRANSACTION WITH THE
47 COUNTY OR SUBJECT TO REGULATION BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL IN WHICH A FINANCIAL
48 INTEREST IS OWNED BY ANOTHER BUSINESS ENTITY IF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR
49 A MEMBER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY HAS A FINANCIAL
50 INTEREST IN THE OTHER BUSINESS ENTITY, AND REASONABLY MAY BE EXPECTED TO
51 KNOW OF BOTH FINANCIAL INTERESTS; OR
52

53 (VI) A BUSINESS ENTITY THAT THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER KNOWS IS A
54 CREDITOR OR OBLIGEE OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR OF A QUALIFYING

1 RELATIVE OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER WITH RESPECT TO A THING OF ECONOMIC
2 VALUE AND, AS A CREDITOR OR OBLIGEE, IS IN A POSITION TO AFFECT DIRECTLY AND
3 SUBSTANTIALLY THE INTEREST OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER OR QUALIFYING
4 RELATIVE OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER.
5

6 **7-5-111. Suspension of disqualification – County Council.**
7

8 **(a) Suspension of disqualification prohibited.**
9

10 (1) (i) Except as provided in subsection (a)(1)(ii), the disqualification arising under
11 § 7-5-110 may not be suspended if the conflict is direct and personal to the County
12 Councilmember, a member of the County Councilmember's immediate family, ~~[[or]]~~ the
13 County Councilmember's employer, OR THE EMPLOYER OF THE COUNTY
14 COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY.
15

16 (ii) IF THE INTEREST OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER, MEMBER OF THE
17 COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY, THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER'S
18 EMPLOYER, OR THE EMPLOYER OF THE COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY
19 IS INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ~~[[Subsection]]~~ SUBSECTION (a)(1)(i)
20 does not apply to a vote on the annual operating budget, in its entirety, ~~[[or]]~~ ON the annual
21 capital budget bill, in its entirety~~[[.]]~~, OR ON ANY LEGISLATION, IN ITS ENTIRETY, BUT DOES
22 APPLY TO INDIVIDUAL AMENDMENTS THERETO.
23

24 SECTION 3. *And be it further enacted*, That this Ordinance shall take effect 45 days
25 from the date it becomes law.