

PROPOSED

COUNTY COUNCIL OF ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

Legislative Session 2026, Legislative Day No. 15

Bill No. 66-26

Introduced by Mr. Volke

By the County Council, July 20, 2026

Introduced and first read on July 20, 2026
Public Hearing set for September 21, 2026
Bill Expires on October 23, 2026

By Order: Kaley Schultze, Administrative Officer

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning: Public Ethics – Enforcement – County Council

2
3 FOR the purpose of authorizing the Ethics Commission to impose a civil penalty for a
4 violation of the public ethics law; authorizing the Ethics Commission to dispose of a
5 complaint by consent order; establishing procedures for the assessment, collection,
6 waiver, and reduction of a civil penalty imposed by the Ethics Commission; allowing
7 for judicial review of a final order of the Ethics Commission for certain unpaid civil
8 penalties; and generally relating to public ethics.

9
10 BY renumbering: §§ 7-4-105 through 7-4-109 to be §§ 7-4-106 through 7-4-110,
11 respectively
12 Anne Arundel County Code (2005, as amended)

13
14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments: §§ 7-4-104(c); 7-8-101; and 7-8-
15 102(b)(1);
16 Anne Arundel County Code (2005, as amended)

17
18 BY adding: § 7-4-105
19 Anne Arundel County Code (2005, as amended)

20
21 SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the County Council of Anne Arundel County, Maryland,*
22 That §§ 7-4-105 through 7-4-109, respectively, of the Anne Arundel County Code (2005,
23 as amended) is hereby renumbered to be §§ 7-4-106 through 7-4-110, respectively.

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate new matter added to existing law.
[[Brackets]] indicate matter deleted from existing law.
Captions and taglines in **bold** in this bill are catchwords and are not law.

ARTICLE 7. PUBLIC ETHICS

TITLE 4. PROCEDURES FOR COMPLAINT

7-4-104. Disposition.

(c) **Violation found.** If the Ethics Commission determines that the respondent has violated any provision of this article, the Ethics Commission may:

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

(2) issue a reprimand;

(3) IMPOSE A CIVIL PENALTY AS PROVIDED IN § 7-4-105; or

[(3)] (4) recommend other appropriate discipline of the respondent authorized by law.

7-4-105. CIVIL PENALTY; CONSENT ORDER.

(A) CIVIL PENALTY AUTHORIZED.

(1) IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER REMEDY AUTHORIZED BY § 7-4-104(C), THE ETHICS COMMISSION MAY IMPOSE A CIVIL PENALTY NOT EXCEEDING \$5,000 FOR A VIOLATION OF THIS ARTICLE.

(2) EACH DAY THAT A VIOLATION CONTINUES IS A SEPARATE VIOLATION FOR PURPOSES OF CALCULATING A CIVIL PENALTY UNDER THIS SECTION, EXCEPT THAT THE TOTAL CIVIL PENALTY IMPOSED FOR A SINGLE COURSE OF CONDUCT ARISING FROM THE SAME TRANSACTION OR OCCURRENCE MAY NOT EXCEED \$5,000.

(3) IN DETERMINING THE AMOUNT OF A CIVIL PENALTY UNDER THIS SECTION, THE ETHICS COMMISSION SHALL CONSIDER:

(I) THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE VIOLATION;

(II) WHETHER THE VIOLATION WAS DELIBERATE, NEGLIGENT, OR INADVERTENT;

(III) WHETHER THE RESPONDENT RECEIVED A FINANCIAL BENEFIT FROM THE VIOLATION;

(IV) WHETHER THE RESPONDENT HAS A PRIOR HISTORY OF VIOLATING THIS ARTICLE; AND

(V) ANY OTHER FACTOR THE ETHICS COMMISSION CONSIDERS RELEVANT TO THE NATURE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE VIOLATION.

(B) CONSENT ORDER.

(1) AT ANY TIME AFTER A COMPLAINT IS FILED UNDER § 7-4-101 AND BEFORE THE ETHICS COMMISSION ISSUES FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW UNDER § 7-4-104(A), THE ETHICS COMMISSION AND THE RESPONDENT MAY DISPOSE OF THE COMPLAINT BY CONSENT ORDER.

1 (2) A CONSENT ORDER UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MAY INCLUDE:

2
3 (I) A STATEMENT OF THE FACTS GIVING RISE TO THE COMPLAINT;

4
5 (II) AN ORDER OF COMPLIANCE DIRECTING THE RESPONDENT TO CEASE AND
6 DESIST FROM THE CONDUCT GIVING RISE TO THE COMPLAINT;

7
8 (III) A CIVIL PENALTY AGREED TO BY THE RESPONDENT, NOT EXCEEDING THE
9 MAXIMUM AMOUNT AUTHORIZED BY SUBSECTION (A); AND

10
11 (IV) ANY OTHER TERMS AGREED TO BY THE ETHICS COMMISSION AND THE
12 RESPONDENT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THIS ARTICLE.

13
14 (3) A CONSENT ORDER UNDER THIS SUBSECTION IS NOT AN ADMISSION OF A
15 VIOLATION OF THIS ARTICLE FOR ANY PURPOSE OTHER THAN ENFORCEMENT OF THE
16 CONSENT ORDER ITSELF, UNLESS THE CONSENT ORDER EXPRESSLY PROVIDES
17 OTHERWISE.

18
19 (4) THE ETHICS COMMISSION SHALL APPROVE A CONSENT ORDER UNDER THIS
20 SUBSECTION BY THE AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
21 ETHICS COMMISSION.

22
23 **(C) PAYMENT; WAIVER OR REDUCTION.**

24
25 (1) A CIVIL PENALTY IMPOSED UNDER THIS SECTION, WHETHER BY ORDER
26 FOLLOWING A HEARING OR BY CONSENT ORDER, SHALL BE PAID TO THE COUNTY
27 GENERAL FUND WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER THE ORDER IMPOSING THE PENALTY BECOMES
28 FINAL, UNLESS THE ORDER SPECIFIES A DIFFERENT PAYMENT SCHEDULE.

29
30 (2) WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER A CIVIL PENALTY IS IMPOSED UNDER THIS SECTION BY
31 ORDER FOLLOWING A HEARING, THE RESPONDENT MAY REQUEST IN WRITING THAT THE
32 ETHICS COMMISSION WAIVE OR REDUCE THE PENALTY FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN. THIS
33 SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A CIVIL PENALTY IMPOSED BY CONSENT ORDER.

34
35 **(D) RELATIONSHIP TO JUDICIAL ENFORCEMENT.**

36
37 (1) A CIVIL PENALTY IMPOSED BY THE ETHICS COMMISSION UNDER THIS SECTION
38 IS IN LIEU OF, AND NOT IN ADDITION TO, A FINE IMPOSED BY A COURT FOR THE SAME
39 VIOLATION UNDER § 7-8-102.

40
41 (2) IF A RESPONDENT FAILS TO PAY A CIVIL PENALTY IMPOSED UNDER THIS
42 SECTION WITHIN THE TIME REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (C), THE ETHICS COMMISSION MAY
43 ENFORCE THE PENALTY AS PROVIDED IN § 7-8-101.

44
45 **TITLE 8. ENFORCEMENT**

46
47 **7-8-101. Petition by Commission.**

48
49 To compel compliance with an order, TO COLLECT AN UNPAID CIVIL PENALTY
50 IMPOSED UNDER §7-4-105, or to seek other relief authorized by this title, the Ethics
51 Commission may file a petition in a circuit court with venue over the proceeding.

52
53 **7-8-102. Judicial Review.**

54
55 **(b) Additional remedies.**

1 (1) In addition, the court may:

2

3 (i) impose a fine not exceeding \$5,000 for a violation of this article, with each
4 day that the violation occurs being a separate offense, PROVIDED THAT THE COURT MAY
5 NOT IMPOSE A FINE UNDER THIS SUBPARAGRAPH FOR A VIOLATION FOR WHICH THE
6 ETHICS COMMISSION HAS ALREADY IMPOSED A CIVIL PENALTY UNDER § 7-4-105; or

7

8 (ii) except as provided in subsection (b)(2), void an official act of an employee
9 if:

10 1. the employee had a conflict of interest that is prohibited by this title;

11

12 2. the act arose from or concerned the subject matter of the conflict;

13

14 3. the proceeding was brought within 90 days after the act occurred; and

15

16 4. the court determines that the conflict had an impact on the act.

17

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