

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

BILL 47-20: ETHICS, ETHICS COMMISSION- CONFLICTS OF INTEREST- FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE- AMENDMENTS

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) expects Bill 47-20 to have a minimal impact on racial equity and social justice among Montgomery County Government employees and the County at-large.

BACKGROUND

The overall intent of the County Public Ethics Law is to “guard against improper influence” in County government.¹ More specifically, “the law sets comprehensive standards for the conduct of County business and requires public employees to disclose information about their financial affairs.”² On December 1, 2020, the Ethics Commission requested that the County Council introduce Bill 47-20 to strengthen the County Public Ethics Law with amendments to:³

- Require County employees to attend a public ethics training course;
 - Amend the law governing appeals of a decision by the Ethics Commission;
 - Amend the law governing the Ethics Commission's resolution of complaints;
 - Modify the restrictions on a public employee's participation in certain matters;
 - Repeal an exception to the restrictions on outside employment for an elected official;
 - Clarify an exception to soliciting or accepting certain small gifts;
 - Modify the procedures for administering the financial disclosure process; and
 - Generally amend the law governing public ethics.⁴
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ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

OLO anticipates that Bill 47-20 would have little to no racial equity or social justice impact on the County workforce or at-large in terms of identifying and/or preventing conflicts of interests or other improper influence in local government.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging, analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffers Dr. Theo Holt and Dr. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins drafted this racial equity and social justice impact statement.

RESJ Impact Statement

¹ <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/Regulation/APPENDIX%20C.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Montgomery County Council, Bill 47-20, Ethics, Ethics Commission-Conflicts of Interest-Financial Disclosure-Amendments, December 1, 2020, Montgomery County Council.

⁴ Ibid