

# Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ)

## BILL 19-21: FINANCE – REPORTS ON SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

### SUMMARY

OLO anticipates that Bill 19-21 will have a minimal impact on racial equity and social justice in the County but could have a favorable impact if it includes amendments requiring the reporting of demographic data on settlement claimants and employees accused of misconduct.

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### BACKGROUND

Bill 19-21, Finance – Reports on Settlement Agreements, was introduced to the County Council on May 18, 2021. The purpose of the Bill is to increase public transparency regarding settlement agreements entered into by the County. Toward this end, Bill 19-21 would require the County Attorney to submit by October 1 of each year a report to the County Executive and County Council describing for each settlement the following:

- The claimant and claimants;
- The dollar amount, or other consideration, under the settlement;
- The nature of the claim; and
- The County departments or offices involved in the claim.

The Bill would also require the publishing of the report on the County website and non-substantive, technical amendments to existing County Code.

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### ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACT

OLO anticipates that Bill 19-21 will have a minimal impact on RESJ in the County as the information required for the annual settlements report will be insufficient for helping the Executive, Council, or the public determine whether racial and social inequities contribute to the County's settlement agreements.

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### RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

To enable the Executive, the Council, and the public to discern whether patterns of racial and social inequities impact the County's settlement agreements, OLO recommends the Council consider amendments to Bill 19-21 to require the County Attorney's annual settlement reports to include demographic data on settlement claimants and County employees accused of misconduct that result in settlements. Additional recommended data points for the County's annual settlement reports include race, ethnicity, gender, and age data for claimants and accused employees.

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# RESJ Impact Statement

## 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 impact 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.

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## CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO Senior Legislative Analyst Dr. Elaine Bonner-Tompkins authored this RESJ impact statement.