

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 1356
Ways and Means

(Howard County Delegation)

Judicial Proceedings

Candidates for Village Board or Columbia Council in a Village of Columbia –
Reports of Donations and Disbursements Ho. Co. 10–24

This bill requires each village community association for a village of Columbia in Howard County to (1) require village board and Columbia Council candidates who receive donations or make disbursements to file reports of the donations and disbursements with the village community association and (2) make the reports publicly available. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill does not directly affect State finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires each “village community association” to require each candidate for election to the village board or the Columbia Council who receives donations or makes disbursements to file reports of the donations and disbursements with the village community association. “Village community association” means a village community association for a village of Columbia in Howard County.

“Donation” means the gift, transfer, or promise of gift or transfer of money or other thing of value to a candidate to promote the election of the candidate.

“Disbursement” means an expenditure, a gift, a transfer, or a promise of money or any other thing of value by a candidate to promote the election of the candidate.

Each village community association must (1) make the reports of donations and disbursements filed by candidates publicly available on the village community association’s website and (2) provide the reports of donations and disbursements to a member of the public on request.

A candidate for election to a village board or the Columbia Council who is elected may not take office if the candidate has failed to file a report of donations and disbursements. A village community association has exclusive authority to determine whether a candidate has properly filed a report of donations and disbursements and may take office.

The bill applies notwithstanding the articles of incorporation, bylaws, rules, or any other governing document of a village community association. In addition, the bill authorizes each village community association to adopt any provision necessary to administer and enforce the bill’s requirements.

Current Law: State law requires disclosure of donations/contributions and disbursements/expenditures by candidates (through campaign finance entities) in elections for State and county offices under Title 13 (Campaign Finance) of the Election Law Article. In addition, under the Local Government Article, if a municipality requires candidates in a municipal election to file campaign finance reports, within 10 days after the filing deadline, each candidate in the municipal election must submit to the State Board of Elections a copy of the campaign finance report that was filed by the candidate. State law, however, does not address financing of campaigns outside of State and local government elections.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 1127 (Howard County Senators) - Rules.

Information Source(s): Howard County; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 25, 2024
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