



April 14, 2026

POLICY ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Lavinia Baxter 
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Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-030-2026 Amendment of Sections 301, 303, 307, and 307A, Charter of Prince George's County

CB-030-2026 (*proposed by:* Council Member Dernoga)

Assigned to the Committee of the Whole Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING Amendments of Sections 301, 303, 307 and 307A, Charter of Prince County for the purpose of proposing an amendments to Section 301, 303, 307, 307A, of the Prince George's County to repeal the at-large composition of the Council, to provide for nine Council districts members, to repeal the provision that the additional members be elected at-large, to repeal the eligibility requirements of at-large members of the Council, to repeal Council member at-large eligibility for additional consecutive terms, to provide that the amendments to Charter Section 307A shall apply to the repeal of the two at-large member seats extinguished on the term ending at noon the first Monday in December 2030, and to provide that the amendments to Charter Section 301, 303, and 307 shall apply to persons elected for the term beginning at noon the first Monday in December 2030, and generally regarding repealing at-large council members.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact:

Expenditures: No additional cost to add this question to the ballot.

Revenues: None

Indirect Impact:

Positive indirect impact likely.

Legislative Summary:

CB-030-2026¹ was presented by Council member Dernoga on March 31 and referred to the Committee of the Whole (COW). The proposed legislation would amend sections 301, 303, and 307 to repeal additional at-large members and return the composition of the Council to (9) nine members. It repeals the eligibility requirements of at-large members of the Council, including repealing the eligibility of Council members to be at-large members for additional consecutive terms. Further, it provides that the amendments to the Charter contained herein are effective for the term beginning at noon on the first Monday in December 2030 and for each election cycle thereafter.

Current Law/Background:

Article II Sections 301, 303, 307 and 307A² of the Charter of Prince George's County provides for the election of two At-Large Members to the County Council. CB-40-2016³, enacted in December 2016, is the underpinning of the charter amendment for At-Large council seats.

Provisions of the Charter include:

1. A County Council Member is elected at the same time as State Officers.
2. A Member shall reside in a different one of the nine Council Districts within Prince George's County.
3. A Member shall be nominated and elected by a qualified voter of the Council district in which they reside.
4. A Member having served two terms is eligible to run for an at-large seat.

Resource Personnel:

- Kathy Canning, Legislative Officer
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Discussion/Policy Analysis:

CB-40-2016

Question D, the approval of (2) two At-Large Members was proposed on the County General Election ballot held in November 2016. The question, approved by 235,318 voters or 66.8 % of the vote, allowed for the election of two at-large members in November 2018⁴. Since then, the County has had seven years of At-

¹ [Prince George's County Council - Reference No. CB-030-2026](#)

² [ARTICLE III. - LEGISLATIVE BRANCH. | Code of Ordinances | Prince George's County, MD | Municode Library](#)

³ [Prince George's County Council - Reference No. CB-040-2016](#)

⁴ [2016 Presidential Election Official Results | Prince George's County](#)

Large member representation across (3) three Gubernatorial cycles and (1) one special election. With the addition of (2) two Members, Council membership has expanded from (9) nine to 11 members, with (2) two additional offices along with their respective staff.

Over the years, the cost for the Council expansion has increased and so has the need to cover staff and resources. Back in 2016, the estimated cost for the expansion of the Council cost voters approximately \$830,987⁵. To date, the annual operating expense budget per office is \$500,000 up increase from \$380,000 in 2022, an increase of \$120,000 or 31.6%. Additionally, each At-Large Council member today earns a salary and fringe benefit of \$180,374.29⁶ an increase of \$15,779, or 9.587% since 2022. The total operating expense, and council member salary for each office is \$788,375.24⁷, totaling approximately \$1.6 million annually for both member At-Large offices.⁸⁹

The sponsor of this legislation seeks to return the charter amendment question to voters if there is value in continuing with the current elected member composition. Essentially, the question being asked is “What impact has the expansion provided to the County?” One might argue that expansion has done nothing more than add additional costs, but not necessarily improve policies, as district members also propose legislation that impacts the County as a whole. It is hard to deny that these seats have created extended terms beyond the two-four-year terms that are permissible by law for members representing any councilmanic district. Under current law, a council member could serve a total of 16 years, (2) two district terms and two At-Large terms on the Council if he/she won back-to-back terms.

Recent research from Dr. Jessica Trounstone at the University of Chicago Center for Effective Government found that, “Adopting district elections will improve descriptive representation for marginalized groups, produce councilors who are closer to voters, and generate political outcomes that are more likely to address the needs of neighborhoods.” She also found that the number of cities using pure at-large systems has declined over the past 20 years, but at-large elections remain a common feature in city politics.”¹⁰ While Dr. Trounstone’s research focused on cities, the premise of her argument can translate to both urban/suburban Counties that are roughly the size of many mid-sized and large American cities.

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CB-30-2026 will have no direct fiscal impact, as the County Board of Elections will incur no additional expenses to add this question to the November 2026 General Election ballot.

- *Indirect Impact*

⁵ [Prince George's County Council - Reference No. CB-040-2016](#)

⁶ Compensation and Fringe

⁷ Staff salary, benefits and offices expense.

⁸ Prince George’s County Council Office of Finance

⁹ [Prince George's County Council - Reference No. CB-009-2026](#)

¹⁰ [District vs At-Large Elections - Center for Effective Government](#)

If the voters vote yes to the ballot question, the savings to the County in 2030 will be approximately \$1.6 million annually and over four years, approximately \$5.5 million. These savings include the annual Special Appropriation Grants (SAG) of \$100,000 for each Council member's office, which is an annual savings of \$200,000.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

Yes.

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

Pursuant to Charter Section 1105, when so proposed, whether by act of the Council or by petition, the question shall be submitted to the voters of the County at the next general election occurring after the passage of said act or the filing of said petition; and if at said election the majority of votes cast on the question shall be in favor of the proposed amendment, such amendment shall stand adopted from and after the thirtieth day following said election.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach out to me via phone or email.