

# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

## COMMITTEE REPORT

2014 Legislative Session

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<b>Reference No.:</b>	CB-85-2014
<b>Draft No.:</b>	1
<b>Committee:</b>	PUBLIC SAFETY AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT
<b>Date:</b>	10-09-2014
<b>Action:</b>	<b>Favorable</b>

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**REPORT:** Committee Vote: **Favorable 3-0 (In Favor: Councilmembers Toles, Lehman and Turner)**

This legislation will increase the cap on compensatory damages awarded and civil fines imposed by the Human Relations Commission (the "Commission") for civil rights violations. The County's cap on compensatory damages has not changed since 1992. Also, the County's cap on civil fines has not changed since it was established in 1998. These caps are not reflective of the increase costs of enforcing civil rights laws; therefore, they do not serve as a deterrent to potential or repeat violators. The legislation is amended to increase the maximum amount of compensatory damages from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and the maximum amount of civil fines from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Also, this bill gives the Commission the authority to collect and negotiate the payment of civil fines and assessments as part of the conciliation procedure without holding a public hearing. These changes will provide additional incentives for the respondents and the Executive Director of the Commission to settle cases without conducting a public hearing.

The Office of Law has reviewed this bill and finds it to be in proper legislative form with no legal impediments to its enactment.

The enactment of CB-85-2014 will have a positive fiscal impact on the County with the increase in compensatory damages and civil fines. The Executive Director of the Commission states that in FY 2014 the amount of fines collected is \$1,500. Also, the Commission's ability to negotiate and collect payment of civil fines and assessments should have a positive fiscal impact.