

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2022 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-019-2022

Draft No.:

Committee: Committee of the Whole

Date: April 25, 2022

Action:

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable, 10-0 (In favor: Council Members Hawkins, Burroughs, Dernoga, Franklin, Glaros, Harrison, Ivey, Streeter, Taveras, and Turner)

CB-19-2022 was considered in the COW on April 25, 2022. Staff provided a summary of the legislation indicating that the proposed legislation amends the Office of Human Rights and Labor Code Sections of County Code. It would require awarding authorities, those who control service contracts at certain types of facilities, to provide information to successor employers on the incumbent service workforce and require the successor employers to offer to retain the incumbent workforce for a period of 90 days. The successor employer may still dismiss workers for good cause within 90 days and after the set terms of employment. CB-19-2022 also describes penalty for noncompliance if the awarding authority or successor entity does not comply.

The sponsor provided comments expressing the need for this legislation. The sponsor expressed concern that during the 2018 election she noticed that in a particular building there was a change in workers, that regular workers were displaced. There was a need to give those workers an opportunity to prove themselves. A good solution was to allow 90 days for the workers to show what they can do to stay employed.

The sponsor further explained that she worked with the business and union industries and employees to come up with a compromise. This is done throughout the Country, and she is looking to continue the trend. Our most vulnerable workers in the county were deeply impacted during COVID, cleaning and security, attest to those needs at the core.

The County Executive Council Liaison indicated that the County Executive is in support of some amendments to the language pertaining to the Office of Human Rights. She has been in contact with the sponsor and a meeting is scheduled to further discuss.

Numerous speakers testified in support of CB-19-2022 and written testimony in support of CB-19-2022 was provided. The workers were employed and lived throughout the county and explained that loss of income and health insurance caused their families many hardships. Some expressed concerns with not being able to find comparable paying jobs.

One speaker indicated that due to similar legislation being implemented in Montgomery County, he was able to get his job back when a new cleaning company took over and refused to hire janitors who had been on the job for as long as 20 years.

The business industry was represented and provided testimony. James Guzman, Cleaning Contractor, indicated this legislation will help to improve standards for workers and create stability for our clients who are commercial property owners. In addition to Prince George's County, his company operates in Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Montgomery County where similar legislation has been in place for many years and has had much success.

Jaime Contreras, Executive Vice President and Capital Area District Director, 32BJ SEIU, spoke in support of CB-19-2022. Mr. Contreras noted two complementary objectives with CB-19-2022: (1) it protects service workers and their families' health and welfare from abrupt discharge and dislocation, and (2) it protects tenants' welfare, safety, and security from unnecessary disruption.

After public testimony, the sponsor made a motion to move forward: that the Executive's amendment would clarify that the Commission must decide on whether somebody has discriminated against the worker and send its determination to the Office of Central Services for appropriate action. It was suggested by the Legislative Officer that the amendment may be of substance.

After further discussion regarding the posture of the legislation, a motion was made to move CB-19-2022 as presented, identifying the amendments prior to introduction. Also, the Policy Group was requested to provide an analysis prior to introduction.

