



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

Calvin Ball
District 2

Jennifer Terrasa
District 3

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Eric Solomon – Public Information Officer
esolomon@howardcountymd.gov
(410) 313-1143

Councilman Calvin Ball and Councilwoman Jen Terrasa Respond to Statement by Executive Kittleman Regarding CB-9

Ellicott City, MD (January 10, 2017) – We are disappointed that Executive Kittleman has already made a decision to veto CB9-2017 before hearing and considering the full public discussion of such an important issue.

If Mr. Kittleman had taken the time to listen to the full community conversation about these issues, he may have heard stories from some of Howard County's own DACA students of how they live in fear. He may have heard about the victims of domestic violence who are afraid to call the police, file a report, or request assistance because they fear deportation. He may have come to understand that this legislation is not only about protecting undocumented immigrants, but also about protecting their U.S. citizen children who won't be able to recognize the full benefits of growing up in a community like Howard County if their parents are afraid to engage with the County or the school system. He may have come to understand that this legislation is also about protecting immigrants who came to this country legally and are still living in fear due to the hateful rhetoric that has dominated our recent national discourse...afraid that their legal immigration status will be questioned, challenged on some technicality, or perhaps simply ignored based on the color of their skin, their accent, or the way they dress.

Executive Kittleman's statement reflects some unfortunate misinformation and some fundamental misunderstandings both of the legislation itself and of the realities our immigrant neighbors face.

Mr. Kittleman claims that CB9-2017 provides a "false sense of security" because it will not protect undocumented immigrants from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and cannot prevent immigrants from being deported. Many undocumented immigrants live with the fear of potential deportation every single day. It is part of their reality. They are well aware that their County Council cannot protect them from ICE. To suggest that immigrants don't understand what this legislation would do is incredibly insulting and demeaning.

Mr. Kittleman also claims that CB9-2017 will compromise our ability to keep our community safe when quite the contrary is true. This bill is in fact a public safety measure. It is critically important to our public safety that all victims and witnesses of crime in our community feel comfortable coming forward to law enforcement to share information without fear of potential detention or deportation. We must make it explicitly clear to all Howard County residents, regardless of their immigration status, that local law enforcement is here to keep our community safe, not to assist the federal government with immigration enforcement. Fear of deportation is often a reason why victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other crimes don't seek assistance. We must use every tool we can to help break down those barriers. In doing so, CB9-2017 will make Howard County stronger and safer for all of us.

In Mr. Kittleman's own press statement about his plans to veto CB9-2017, he noted that this bill will not supersede any federal or state law, or any existing agreement between the County and any other federal, state or local government. Therefore, it does nothing to jeopardize existing cooperation from ICE in targeting criminal activity within Howard County. If it is true that the Howard County Police Department "has never been engaged in the enforcement of immigration laws," merely codifying existing Police Department policy and practice will most certainly not "compromise public safety efforts" as claimed.

Some have suggested that the Police Department already follows the policy which CB9-2017 would codify to try to make the point that this legislation is unnecessary. Mr. Kittleman told the Baltimore Sun, "It would be different if there was a problem." There is a problem. The hate-filled, anti-immigrant rhetoric which dominated the presidential campaign have helped create stifling levels of fear within portions of our community. There is a very real problem, and we can do something about it.

Policies not to enforce federal immigration law do very little to promote confidence among undocumented immigrants unless those policies are widely known and unless people can trust that those policies will not be reversed without a public process. CB9-2017 sends a clear public message that residents of any immigration status can participate safely in all aspects of County life and ensures that the County will not reverse that policy in the future, at least not without a public legislative process.

The Executive also raised concerns that CB9-2017 would jeopardize federal funding. Currently, CB9-2017 would have no fiscal impact. While we cannot predict what the funding priorities of the incoming federal Administration will be, we do not believe local policy decisions should be driven by anticipating federal retribution. These vague threats should not have a chilling effect on our community values. We can and will deal with actual conditions placed on real federal dollars once there is a policy in place to which we can respond.

While it would appear the County Executive has already made a final decision on this matter, we hope that he will take the time to listen to our residents, consider our values as a community, and reconsider his decision. It is a time to stand by the values that make Howard County the best place to live and make sure it is a great place for all of our neighbors.

[Click here](#) to view Ball and Terrasa's CB 9-2017 FAQs.

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