



# NEWS RELEASE

## HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Howard County Council Introduces Charter Amendment to Establish an Inspector General Office**

*Ellicott City, MD (July 26, 2024)* – The Howard County Council will introduce and vote on a Charter Amendment (CR107) to establish an independent Office of Inspector General aimed at promoting government transparency and accountability at its Legislative Session on July 29, 2024. Once approved by the County Council, this Charter Amendment will appear on the November 2024 ballot to be adopted by Howard County voters.

CR107 authorizes the County Council to create an Inspector General Office separate from the operational control of both the Executive and Legislative branches of the County Government. These proposed changes to the Charter give the Council the ability to establish processes for appointment, removal, and oversight of the Inspector General, as well as require annual funding of the Office as a distinct budget category. A separate ordinance with additional details on the implementation of the Inspector General Office and position will follow the approval of the Charter Amendment and adoption of the ballot referendum in November.

“With this Charter Amendment, the Council will have the flexibility to create an Inspector General Office that will be independent, be fully funded, and have access to outside counsel if need be,” said Council Chair Deb Jung. “I am extremely pleased that all five Councilmembers have come together to support a Charter Amendment and that Councilmember Liz Walsh helped pave the way with her introduction of CB47-2024 and CB48-2024.”

CR107 empowers the Office of the Inspector General to enhance accountability and oversight of County departments and offices, as well as entities receiving funds from the County Government.

“I am delighted that overwhelming public support demonstrated earlier this month for District 1’s legislation to establish an Office of the Inspector General — now — has prompted this unanimously supported Charter Amendment to do the same,” said Councilmember Liz Walsh. “Howard County voters: it’s up to you to vote in favor of this Charter Amendment in November. Meantime, for the Council, the next obvious step is to get the effecting bills passed and in practice.”

“This initiative represents a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to transparency, accountability, and integrity within Howard County Government. The creation of the Office of Inspector General responds to the loss of robust local investigative journalism and ensures that we maintain and build upon the trust between the people we serve and Howard County Government,” said Councilmember Christiana Rigby.

“Creating an Office of Inspector General will ensure that Howard County Government operations maintain the highest level of integrity and efficiency,” said Councilmember Opel Jones.

“I appreciate the collaboration with my colleagues to reach consensus on this important effort. We should use this opportunity to improve government accountability by creating an independent, bipartisan Inspector General,” said Councilmember David Yungmann.

Members of the County Council held a press conference on July 26, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. to discuss CR107. The Council will vote on CR107 on July 29, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in the Banneker Room of the George Howard Building. CR107 can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3A042Dm>.