

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW

GEORGE A. NILSON, City Solicitor  
101 City Hall  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

May 15, 2015

Honorable President and Members  
of the City Council of Baltimore  
Room 409, City Hall  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Attn: Karen Randle Executive Secretary

Re: City Council Bill No. 15-0499 – Public Ethics Law – Prohibited Gifts-  
Closing Gaps

Dear President and City Council Members:

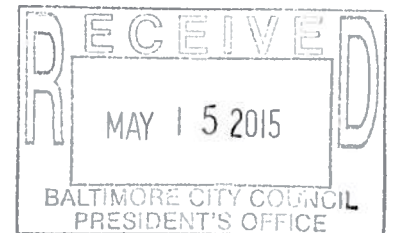
You have requested the advice of the Law Department regarding City Council Bill 15-0499. City Council Bill 499 amends the City's Ethics Code to clarify that certain prohibitions encompass gifts from persons that a public servant knows or has reason to know seeks to engage in an activity that is regulated by the public servant's agency or from persons that have recently been lobbyists with respect to matters within the jurisdiction of the public servant.

The Maryland State Ethics Law requires that ethics codes adopted by local subdivisions be similar to the State law with respect to conflicts of interest, financial disclosure and lobbying. See Md. Ann. Code, General Provisions Art., Sections 5-808, 5-809 and 5-810. Furthermore, provisions applicable to local elected officials must be equivalent to or exceed the requirements of the State law. Id. The local ethics laws, however, can "be modified to the extent necessary to make the provisions relevant to the prevention of conflicts of interest in that jurisdiction." See Sec. 5-808. City Council Bill 15-0499 is consistent with this requirement.

Accordingly, the Law Department approves City Council Bill 15-0499 for form and legal sufficiency.

Sincerely yours,

Elena R. DiPietro  
Chief Solicitor



cc: George A. Nilson, City Solicitor  
Angela Gibson, City Council Liaison, Mayor's Office  
Hilary Ruley  
Victor Tervalo  
Jennifer Landis