

Robert Cennamo

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Robert Cennamo, Chief	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432, City Hall (410) 396-4774		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 19-0377: Whistleblower Rights and Responsibilities		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

September 13, 2019

Position: Does Not Oppose

City Council Bill 19-0377 proposes prohibiting retaliation against whistleblowers, establishing procedures for filing complaints for retaliation, and authorizing and mandating the Office of the Inspector General to investigate complaints of retaliation filed by whistleblowers.

Background

The central provision of this bill will ensure that employees who disclose fraud, a violation of law, misuse or waste of public resources, or threat to health, safety, or security within city government are protected from retaliatory personnel actions. Providing this protection promotes accountability within City government by making it safer to come forward. Currently, there is no protection for whistleblowers and the City Code that addresses Employee Disclosure Protection does not describe policies or procedures.

Fiscal Impact

It is unclear how many new cases would result from this bill, so the fiscal impact is not definite. However, based on discussion with the OIG, if there were high volumes of cases reported, the workload could require the establishment of a new Whistleblower Investigations Unit with up to additional three FTE agents at a cost of approximately \$300,000 annually, as well as external training for agents and material costs for agents to train City management. If passed, the Department of Finance intends to monitor the volume of complaints before considering appropriating additional resources.

This legislation may encourage employees to report problems, which could ultimately save the City money as misuse and fraud are reported and addressed. However, we are unable to calculate what that number could be considering the unknowns of how many cases may occur and the focus of cases.

Conclusion

The Department of Finance supports the intent of this legislation to protect employees who report misconduct from retaliatory personnel actions. Additionally, the Department believes this bill may result in some savings as reports of fraud and misuse of resources are filed. However, we expect the development of a special Whistleblower Investigations Unit could require additional personnel, dependent on the number of cases that are reported.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance does not oppose City Council Bill 19-0377.

cc: Henry Raymond
Matthew Stegman
Nina Themelis