

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. 15-0498 – Public Ethics Law – Prohibited Gifts-
Duplicative Exemptions

Dear President and City Council Members:

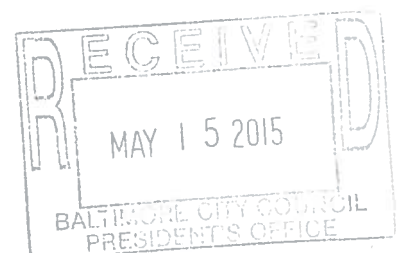
You have requested the advice of the Law Department regarding City Council Bill 15-0498. City Council Bill 498 amends the City's Ethics Code to consolidate overlapping and redundant exemptions for gifts related to the payment of expenses for a speaking engagement or for participation on a panel.

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 15-0498 is consistent with this requirement.

Accordingly, the Law Department approves City Council Bill 15-0498 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