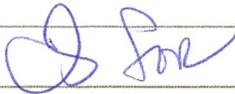


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Robert Cename, Chief 	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432. City Hall (410) 396-4941		
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 18-0230 – Ethics Code – Transparency in Lobbying Act		

DATE:

TO

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

June 15, 2018

City Council Bill #18-0230 was created for the purpose of requiring quarterly rather than annual lobbying reports from lobbyists; requiring the Ethics Board to post lobbying reports online within 30 days of their receipt; requiring that lobbyists affirmatively identify themselves and their clients when engaging in lobbying activities; allowing the Ethics Board to prohibit a person found to have violated the lobbying provisions of the Ethics Code from lobbying City public servants for up to 3 years; clarifying and conforming related provisions; and generally relating to the regulation of lobbyists.

The Ethics Board does not have a separate budget, and its staff and activities are funded through the Legislative Reference agency. This proposal will have some costs, stemming from technology and/or human resource investments needed to handle quarterly lobbying reports and post them online within 30 days.

The Board receives approximately 200 annual reports on paper from lobbyists, averaging ten pages each, which provide details on lobbying expenses and gifts. Currently, the reports are not posted online, though the Board’s website includes annually updated lists of registered lobbyists. It would be challenging for Ethics Board staff to absorb the workload associated with manually scanning the reports and putting them online each quarter, especially if they are posted individually in a searchable format that is user-friendly for the public. Based on its experience with a similar effort in 2014 — scanning and posting financial disclosure forms — the Ethics Board would utilize a temporary employee to assist for one week each quarter at an estimated total cost of \$2,100 per year. Another option would be creating a new module on the Board’s website that would allow lobbyists to fill out the forms online, and would then store the forms in a searchable database that is publically accessible. The Baltimore City Office of Information and Technology (BCIT) has not done an estimate of costs for this work, but the City’s procurement records show that developing an online financial disclosure form module for the Ethics Board cost about \$60,000 in Fiscal 2014.

This proposal generated no objections from various city agencies, and its requirements could be met without a significant fiscal impact on the City. Therefore, the Department of Finance has no objection to the passage of Council Bill #18-0230.

cc: Henry Raymond
 Kyron Banks