



*Gregory J. Swain, County Attorney*

## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Council Members, Anne Arundel County Council

**From:** Gregory J. Swain, County Attorney /s/

**Date:** December 16, 2019

**Subject:** Bill No. 94-19, Boards, Commissions, and Similar Bodies – Human Relations Commission

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### **Legislative Summary**

This summary was prepared by the Anne Arundel County Office of Law for use by members of the Anne Arundel County Council during consideration of Bill No. 94-19, a Bill that clarifies the purpose and composition of the Human Relations Commission (the “Commission”).

#### **Purpose.**

The purpose of the Bill is to clarify the criteria for the composition of the Human Relations Commission and clarify that the powers and duties of the Commission extend beyond discrimination in housing.

#### **Background.**

Bill No. 57-19 established the Human Relations Commission, granted the Commission certain powers regarding discrimination, and created a process for the Commission to receive and decide complaints of discrimination in housing. Previously, the Commission existed based on an executive order; most recently, Executive Order # 25 issued by former County Executive Steven R. Schuh.

Members of the Commission raised a question as to whether their powers under Bill No. 57-19 were contracted from the scope of engagement set out in Executive Order # 25 (which, in light of Bill No. 57-19, has now been rescinded). Upon review, the Office of Law has opined that the Commission has powers under Bill No. 57-19 that extend beyond discrimination in housing, but that the “purpose” clause of Bill No. 57-19 should be revised so the stated purpose of the Commission is not limited to discrimination in housing. The procedural remedies provided in Bill No. 57-19 for addressing discrimination in housing complaints are not affected by this bill.

**SECTION 1.**

Section 3-5A-102 is amended to change the purpose statement from “discrimination in housing” to “discrimination.”

Section 3-5A-103(a) is reworded to clarify all members must be residents of the County, and to provide that any four of the eleven members be representative of the County’s ethnic and minority diversity.

Section 3-5A-108(a)(5) is amended to specify that the Commission’s power to hold public hearings is only to address complaints of discrimination in housing, as provided in § 3-5A-206.

**SECTION 2.** (uncodified) provides that the bill takes effect 45 days after it becomes law.

The Office of Law is available to answer any additional questions regarding Bill No. 94-19. Thank you.

cc: Honorable Steuart Pittman, County Executive  
Jennifer Purcell, Chief of Staff  
Benjamin J. Birge, Chief Administrative Officer  
Peter Baron, Legislative Liaison  
Jim Beauchamp, Budget Officer  
Kaley Schultze, Boards and Commissions Coordinator & Legislative Assistant