

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED LOCAL LAWS – UPDATES TO REQUIRED NUMBERS OF BILL 29-22: COUNCILMEMBER VOTES

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 29-22 will have a minimal, positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County as it assists in implementing Bill 41-21, Elections – Council Districts – Boundaries, which supports increased political representation and power for Black, Indigenous, and Other People of Color (BIPOC) residents.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

The purpose of RESJ impact statements is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. Racial equity and social justice refer to a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of communities of color and low-income communities with a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities.¹ Achieving racial equity and social justice usually requires seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social harms that have caused racial and social inequities.²

PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 29-22

In December 2021, the County Council voted to enact Bill 41-21, Elections – Council Districts – Boundaries, which revised Council district boundaries to create seven new districts in place of the five former districts. The addition of two new districts expanded the County Council from 9 Councilmembers (5 district Councilmembers and 4 at-large Councilmembers) to 11 Councilmembers (7 district Councilmembers and 4 at-large Councilmembers).³

The purpose of Expedited Bill 29-22 is to update vote thresholds in the County Code to reflect the greater number of Councilmembers.⁴ Certain decisions requiring six or seven affirmative votes for approval will now require seven or eight votes, respectively. Expedited Bill 29-22 was introduced to the Council on November 1, 2022.

In December 2021, OLO published a RESJ impact statement (RESJIS) for Expedited Bill 41-21, Elections – Council Districts – Boundaries.⁵ Please refer to this RESJIS for background on voting rights, political representation, and racial equity, and for an analysis on the RESJ impact of redistricting.

RESJ Impact Statement

Expedited Bill 29-22

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

Expedited Bill 29-22 revises the County Code to align vote thresholds with the new number of Councilmembers, following the enactment of Expedited Bill 41-21. Expedited Bill 41-21 created two new Council districts where specific BIPOC groups account for the greatest share of residents: Council District 6 where Latinx residents are the largest ethnic group, and Council District 5 where Black residents are the largest racial group. The addition of two new Council districts with these demographic features increases the political representation and power of BIPOC residents in the County and thus enhances RESJ.

Since Expedited Bill 29-22 helps to implement Expedited Bill 41-21, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 29-22 will have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. Given that the changes are technical, OLO anticipates the RESJ impact will be minimal.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires OLO to consider whether recommended amendments to bills aimed at narrowing racial and social inequities are warranted in developing RESJ impact statements.⁶ OLO finds Expedited Bill 29-22 will have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this racial equity and social justice impact statement should be noted. First, predicting the impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJ impact statement is intended to inform the legislative process rather than determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

¹ Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from “Applying a Racial Equity Lens into Federal Nutrition Programs” by Marlysa Gamblin, et.al. Bread for the World, and from Racial Equity Tools. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>

² Ibid

³ “Montgomery County Council Enacts Legislation to Revise Council District Boundaries as Recommended by the Montgomery County Commission on Redistricting with Limited Changes Based on Community Input,” Press Releases, Montgomery County Council Legislative Branch, December 7, 2021.

https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=39641&Dept=1

⁴ Expedited Bill 29-22, Local Laws – Updates to Required Numbers of Councilmember Votes, Introduced November 1, 2022.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2022/20221101/20221101_9A.pdf

⁵ Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statement for Expedited Bill 41-21, Office of Legislative Oversight, Montgomery County, Maryland, December 7, 2021. <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/resjis/2021/Bill41-21RESJ.pdf>

⁶ Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council