

**Worksession**

**MEMORANDUM**

November 15, 2012

TO: Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee

FROM: Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney *A. Mihill*

SUBJECT: **Worksession:** Bill 29-12, Merit System Protection Board – Annual Public Forum – Elimination

Bill 29-12, Personnel – Merit System Protection Board – Annual Public Forum – Elimination, sponsored by the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee was introduced on October 16, 2012. A public hearing was held on November 13.

Bill 29-12 would eliminate the requirement for the Merit System Protection Board to hold an annual public forum on personnel management in the county government.

The Council received a memorandum from Bruce Ervin Wood, Chair of the Merit System Protection Board, supporting Bill 29-12 (©4). Mr. Wood argues that the forum is not well-attended and the resources and time spent in coordinating the forum could be better used on the ongoing oversight responsibilities of the Board.

**Council staff recommendation:** enact Bill 29-12.

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Bill No. 29-12  
Concerning: Merit System Protection  
Board – Annual Public Forum –  
Elimination  
Revised: 9/12/2012 Draft No. 1  
Introduced: October 16, 2012  
Expires: April 16, 2014  
Enacted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive: \_\_\_\_\_  
Effective: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sunset Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ch. \_\_\_\_\_, Laws of Mont. Co. \_\_\_\_\_

## COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

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By: Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee

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**AN ACT** to:

- (1) eliminate the requirement for the Merit System Protection Board to hold an annual public forum on personnel management in the county government; and
- (2) generally amend the personnel law.

By amending

Montgomery County Code  
Chapter 33, Personnel and Human Resources  
Section 33-7

<b>Boldface</b>	<i>Heading or defined term.</i>
<u>Underlining</u>	<i>Added to existing law by original bill.</i>
[Single boldface brackets]	<i>Deleted from existing law by original bill.</i>
<u>Double underlining</u>	<i>Added by amendment.</i>
[[Double boldface brackets]]	<i>Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.</i>
* * *	<i>Existing law unaffected by bill.</i>

*The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:*

**Sec. 1. Section 33-7 is amended as follows:**

**33-7. County executive and merit system protection board responsibilities.**

\* \* \*

**[(j) *Public forum.*** The Board must convene at least annually a public forum on personnel management in the county government to examine the implementation of Charter requirements and the merit system law.]

*Approved:*

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Roger Berliner, President, County Council

Date

*Approved:*

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Isiah Leggett, County Executive

Date

*This is a correct copy of Council action.*

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Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council

Date

## LEGISLATIVE REQUEST REPORT

Bill 29-12

*Merit System Protection Board – Annual Public Forum – Elimination*

<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	Bill 29-12 would eliminate the requirement for the Merit System Protection Board to hold an annual public forum on personnel management in the county government.
<b>PROBLEM:</b>	The annual forum requires time and resources, but is not well-attended.
<b>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:</b>	To eliminate the requirement that the Board hold an annual forum.
<b>COORDINATION:</b>	Merit System Protection Board
<b>FISCAL IMPACT:</b>	To be requested.
<b>ECONOMIC IMPACT:</b>	To be requested.
<b>EVALUATION:</b>	To be requested.
<b>EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE:</b>	To be researched.
<b>SOURCE OF INFORMATION:</b>	Amanda Mihill, Legislative Attorney, 240-777-7815
<b>APPLICATION WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES:</b>	To be researched.
<b>PENALTIES:</b>	N/A



MERIT SYSTEM PROTECTION BOARD

MEMORANDUM

November 13, 2012

TO: Roger Berliner, President  
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Bruce Ervin Wood *Bruce Ervin Wood*  
Chairperson *by tel*

SUBJECT: Written Testimony in Support of Bill 28-12, Personnel – Merit System Review  
Commission – Amendments and Bill 29-12, Merit System Protection Board –  
Annual Public Forum – Elimination

The purpose of this memorandum is to indicate the Board's strong support for Bill 28-12, Personnel – Merit System Review Commission – Amendments and Bill 29-12, Merit System Protection Board – Annual Public Forum – Elimination. Below is a discussion of the rationale for our support.

**There Is No Need For A Merit System Review Commission As The County Charter Already Ensures Ongoing Oversight And Protection Of the Merit System.**

Section 33-5(d) of the County Code required that the County Council convene a Merit System Review Commission no later than July 1, 1980. It also provides that, if determined necessary by the Council, the Council subsequently would appoint a Merit System Review Commission at intervals of four years. The Council convened the first and only Merit System Review Commission in 1980 and the Merit System Review Commission issued a report in 1981.

The County Charter established the merit system for employees of the County Government in 1948. At that time, the predecessor to the Merit System Protection Board (MSPB or Board), the Personnel Board, was established and tasked with protecting the merit system and employee rights guaranteed under the merit system. Today, the MSPB continues this mandate to oversee and protect the merit system and employee's rights. Among the oversight duties of the Board, pursuant to Section 404 of the Charter, is the review of and comment on any proposed changes to the merit system law or regulations, as well as the conducting of special studies on the administration of the merit and retirement pay systems as the Board deems warranted.

The County Council's Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee also exercises continuing oversight into personnel and merit system issues. The Board works closely with the GO Committee on an ongoing basis to strengthen and protect the merit system. Given this strong working relationship between the GO Committee and the Board in ensuring effective

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ongoing oversight and protection of the merit system, there is no need for any additional oversight. This position is supported by the fact that since the first Merit System Review Commission was appointed in 1980 and reported in 1981, the County Council has determined that it was not necessary to appoint another Merit System Review Commission. Therefore, the Board strongly supports the enactment of Bill 28-12.

**There Is No Need For An Annual Public Forum**

Section 33-7(j) of the County Code establishes the requirement that the Board hold an annual public forum on personnel management in the County Government to examine the implementation of the Charter requirements and the merit system law. While the Board has faithfully met the requirement to hold such a forum each year, it has been the Board's experience that the forum is not well-attended (e.g., for the last two years there were three and five attendees respectively). It is the Board's opinion that the time and resources expended in coordinating the forum each year could be better spent on the ongoing oversight responsibilities of the Board. Therefore, the Board strongly supports Bill 29-12 to eliminate the requirement for an annual public forum.