



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

RE: Council Resolution Testimony CR23-2026

Good evening, Chair and members of the Council. My name is Kristy Mumma, and I am speaking tonight representing the Howard County Citizens Association. Since its founding in 1961, HCCA has been dedicated to the preservation of Howard County's unique character and the integrity of its governing processes. Our mission is rooted in the belief that an informed and active citizenry is the best safeguard for a healthy community. It is in that spirit of civic stewardship that we speak tonight in support of Resolution CR23-2026.

The Howard County Charter is more than a list of rules; it is the constitution of our local government. It defines who we are and how we operate. However, many sections of our current Charter still use gendered pronouns and terminology that date back to an era that does not reflect our modern reality. HCCA believes that clarity in our foundational documents is essential for good governance. By adopting gender-neutral language, we remove ambiguity and more importantly, ensure that the Charter is inclusive of every citizen and every public servant. This is a matter of administrative modernization and professionalizing our legislative framework to meet 21st-century standards.

At its core, HCCA is an organization built on the principle of robust citizen participation. We believe that the residents of Howard County should be the ultimate arbiters of how they are governed. By submitting this amendment to the voters in the next general election, this Council is demonstrating a commitment to the democratic process. We strongly support the opportunity for our members and the broader community to engage with their Charter, to discuss its contents, and to cast their vote on its future. There

is no higher form of civic engagement than the referendum, and we applaud this inclusive approach.

In an era where trust in institutions can be fragile, small steps toward inclusivity and transparency go a long way. When a resident opens the County Charter and sees language that clearly includes them, it fosters a sense of belonging and ownership in our local government. HCCA advocates for a Howard County where every voice can be heard, and where our laws reflect the diverse and vibrant population that makes this county such a desirable place to live.

In conclusion, CR23-2026 is a common-sense update that aligns our governing documents with our community values while upholding the vital tradition of voter approval. The Howard County Citizens Association urges this Council to vote FAVORABLE on this resolution and to move forward with the process of bringing our Charter into the modern era through the voice of the people.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the HCCA membership, and for your continued service to the residents of Howard County.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Mumma speaking for HCCA