

FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT



Frederick County Ethics Commission

Gwen Romack, Chair

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Commissioners

Blaine R. Young
President

C. Paul Smith
Vice President

Billy Shreve
David P. Gray
Kirby Delauter

Lori L. Depies, CPA
County Manager

Adopted: May 20, 2014

FREDERICK COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION POLICY

RE: POLITICAL ADVOCACY BY ETHICS COMMISSION MEMBERS

Background:

The members of the Ethics Commission, who are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for Frederick County, Maryland, are all residents of Frederick County. As members of the Ethics Commission, the members may be called upon to decide complaints filed against members of the Board of County Commissioners. When Frederick County becomes a Charter County in December 2014, the Ethics Commission may be asked to make decisions on complaints filed against the County Executive or members of the County Council. These officials are all subject to the County Ethics Ordinance.

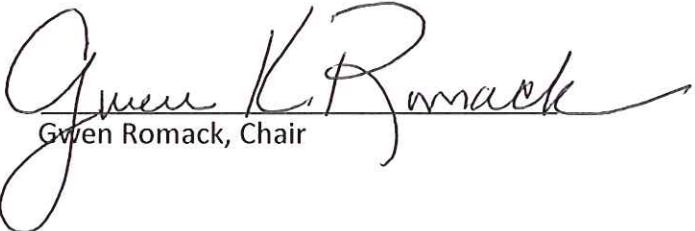
As residents of Frederick County, the Ethics Commission's members recognize that they must balance their rights as citizens to participate in the political process against the need to avoid political bias or the appearance of bias towards the elected officials who are or may become subject to the County Ethics Ordinance. The Ethics Commission believes that it is important for the individual members of the Commission to publicly remain neutral towards candidates for these public offices and towards the persons holding those offices.

Definitions:

1. *Candidates.* Persons who are candidates for election or appointment to the office of County Executive or County Council Member in Frederick County.
2. *Elected officials.* Persons holding office as either the County Executive or County Council Member in Frederick County on or after December 1, 2014. This term also includes the persons serving on the Board of County Commissioners for Frederick County from the effective date of this policy until December 1, 2014.

Policy:

1. This policy applies to advocacy on behalf of candidates during primary and general election campaigns in Frederick County. This policy also applies to advocacy on behalf of candidates seeking appointment to fill a vacancy as County Executive or County Council member. This policy further applies at all times with regard to advocacy on behalf of elected officials.
2. Members of the Ethics Commission will not attend fundraisers or donate money to benefit candidates or elected officials.
3. Members will not publicly endorse candidates or elected officials. This includes attendance at political events, whether free of charge or paid, in which candidates or elected officials are expected to appear. It also includes posting campaign signs on the property where an Ethics Commission member resides and allowing such signs to be posted at their residences by others.
4. Members will not make public statements, either positive or negative, concerning candidates or elected officials.
5. Members of the Ethics Commission may take public positions on public issues and attend meetings held to educate County residents on public issues and to discuss those issues, to the extent consistent with the preceding paragraphs of this policy.
6. Nothing in this policy is to be construed to prevent the Ethics Commission members from exercising their right to vote for political candidates and elected officials of their choice.


Gwen Romack, Chair