

Ensure the charter is community centered

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To: Charter Board <CharterBoard@charlescountymd.gov>

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Charter Board Members,

Hello Charter Board Members,

I want to first thank you for taking on the difficult task of drafting the charter document and your work in gathering public input.

In the push to make sure the charter presented to voters in the November election puts community first, I am urging the charter board to include the measures below which will help residents to hold their representatives accountable, reduce the power special interest groups have in the county, and prevent possible corruption.

Removal Recommendation: allow residents to petition 20% of the registered voters within a Council member's or the Executive's district to get a special ballot referendum to, if approved, send the Council a non-binding recommendation to hold a public hearing and vote on the removal of the Council member or Executive cited in the petition.

Banning Special Interest Money in County Elections: prohibiting Council and Executive candidates from receiving direct or in-kind campaign contributions from developer and utility companies, as well as companies that contract with County government.

Banning Elected Officials' families from profiting from holding office: prohibiting businesses or nonprofits that Council members or the Executive family members own or sit on the board, from receiving Charles County government funds.

Including these measures will help ensure that power is put back in the hands of residents. Again, I urge the Charter Board to add the measures above into the final charter draft.

Richard Cook
