

FW: 11/9 Charter Board Written Comments

Charter Board <CharterBoard@charlescountymd.gov>

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To: Jesse L. Bungcayao <BungcayJ@charlescountymd.gov>

From: Roderick Lewis <rodericklewis23@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 9:17:48 PM (UTC+00:00) Monrovia, Reykjavik

To: Charter Board <CharterBoard@charlescountymd.gov>

Subject: 11/9 Charter Board Written Comments

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First, I would like to thank the Charter Board for the work you have all done so far. I have learned a good bit from the various officials, experts, and stakeholders who have come and shared their experiences with Code Home Rule and Charter Government.

I believe Charter government has the ability to provide Charles County residents with a greater sense of checks and balances within county government. The current structure of having the executive and legislative powers both with the Board of County Commissioners is confusing to some of our residents. I argue resting the executive powers within a County Executive and the legislative powers within a County Council would bring clarity to our local government. Along those lines, I think it's appropriate for a County Executive to have veto authority, but I also think it's appropriate for the Council to have veto override authority. The process of hiring county agency department heads should be a joint process between the County Executive and the County Council similar to the process between the President and the U. S. Senate with respect to Cabinet-level positions.

I think term limits on the County Executive are appropriate and would recommend a 4-year term serving no more than 2 consecutive terms, but allowing individuals to serve again once sitting out for at least 1 term. I'm not in favor of term limits on the County Council, but I do support having them run in staggered elections so the entire council is not up for re-election at the same time. There should also be a residency requirement to run for County Executive or County Council.

Lastly, I urge the board to draft a Charter that is balanced and innovative so that participation in local government is incentivized and not just available. I believe this can be achieved in many different ways, but I encourage the committee to look at participatory budgeting as a mechanism to involve the public in the budget process to a greater and more impactful extent. You can learn more about participatory budgeting and where it is currently being practiced at <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/about-pb/#what-is-pb>

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Roderick Lewis
Charles County Resident