Montgomery County Council

Committee: GO
Committee Review: At a future date
Staff: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney
Purpose: To receive testimony – no vote expected

AGENDA ITEM #9
September 15, 2026
Public Hearing

SUBJECT

Bill 33-26, Cable Communications - Community Media Organizations – Requirements

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Stewart

Co-Sponsors: Council Vice-President Balcombe and Councilmembers Katz and Evans

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

Public speakers

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- Receive testimony.
- A GO worksession is scheduled for October 8, 2026.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

Bill 33-26 would:

(1) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to adopt a racial equity and social justice statement;
(2) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to include certain membership on the organization's board of directors;
(3) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to follow certain standards of public ethics and public access; and
(4) generally amend the law regarding cable communications and community cable organizations.

<u>This report contains:</u>

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Agenda Item #9
September 15, 2026
Public Hearing

M E M O R A N D U M

September 10, 2026

TO: County Council

FROM: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Bill 33-26, Cable Communications - Community Media Organizations – Requirements

PURPOSE: Public Hearing – receive testimony

Bill 33-26, Cable Communications - Community Media Organizations – Requirements, was introduced on July 21, 2026. The Lead Sponsor is Councilmember Stewart. Co-Sponsors are Council Vice-President Balcombe and Councilmembers Katz and Evans.

Bill 33-26 would:

(1) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to adopt a racial equity and social justice statement;
(2) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to include certain membership on the organization's board of directors;
(3) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to follow certain standards of public ethics and public access; and
(4) generally amend the law regarding cable communications and community cable organizations.

BACKGROUND

As explained by the Lead Sponsor, "This legislation is intended to improve the governance structure of community media organizations in the county. The legislation aligns community media governance structures with comparable local community media organizations in the region and country…" *See* Lead Sponsor's Memorandum at © 7.

BILL SPECIFICS

Bill 33-26 would require a community media organization hired by the County to adopt a racial equity and social justice statement; adhere to certain ethics rules; and include certain members within its board of directors.

The required racial equity and social justice statement would include:

- a statement of commitment to racial equity and social justice as part of the organization's core values;
- active recruitment of potential board members from diverse backgrounds and outreach to communities of color;
- a formal process to assess organizational culture and identify barriers to inclusion in board participation and leadership;
- communications and business practices that are tailored to the needs of communities of color and other marginalized communities;
- a process to identify and address discriminatory or non-inclusive behaviors;
- organizational policies and procedures that address diversity and inclusion; and
- a clear, realistic, actionable, and measurable commitment to addressing racial equity that is woven into the governance and culture of the community media organization.

Each member of the board of directors of the community organization would be required to file a financial disclosure statement with the Ethics Commission under Chapter 19A.

In terms of board membership, the board would be required to include up to 7 voting members who must be residents of the County, including:

- at least one member who is nominated by the County Council; and
- at least one member who is nominated by the County Executive;

Bill No. 33-26
Concerning: Cable Communications - Community Media Organizations - Requirements
Revised: July 28, 2026 Draft No. 1
Introduced: July 28, 2026
Expires: December 7, 2026
Enacted: ______
Executive: ______
Effective: ______
Sunset Date: ______
Ch. ____, Laws of Mont. Co. ______

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Stewart
Co-Sponsors: Council Vice-President Balcombe and Councilmembers Katz and Evans

AN ACT to:
(1) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to adopt a racial equity and social justice statement;
(2) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to include certain membership on the organization's board of directors;
(3) require a community media organization that contracts with the County to follow certain standards of public ethics and public access; and
(4) generally amend the law regarding cable communications and community cable organizations.

By amending
Montgomery County Code
Chapter 8A, Cable Communications
Section 8A-32

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

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

Sec. 1. Section 8A-32 is amended as follows:

8A-32. Community media organizations.

(a) The County may contract with one or more community media organizations using funds from the Cable TV Special Revenue Fund or any other funds the County designates for community media in the approved County budget and under the County cable communications plan. Unless prohibited or otherwise limited under its contract with the County, the cable communications plan, or any executive regulation, a community media organization may also receive revenues from other sources.

(b) The purpose of a community media organization is to provide community media training, equipment, facilities, centers, and community media engagement platforms to enable residents, businesses, and community organizations to engage with, connect to, and inform other residents, businesses, community organizations, governments, and agencies by using community media. Supporting community engagement, communication, and education through community media and use of community media engagement platforms builds better understanding among a diverse population, increases opportunities for participation in and awareness of local culture and government, and promotes quality of life and economic development.

(c) The County may require a community media organization to perform one or more of the following functions as specified in the contract between the County and the community media organization:

(1) manage the community media engagement platforms, including public access channels assigned to it by the County, community

media websites and social media, and manage community media centers, facilities, and equipment;

(2) establish policies and procedures for the use of any community media engagement platform and any community media center, facility, or equipment;

(3) train members of the community in the production of community media and use of any community media engagement platform;

(4) maintain any community media engagement platform and community media center, facility, or equipment for community use, including use by the general public, any community organization, and the business community;

(5) provide technical community media engagement platform and community media center, facility, and equipment assistance and support to the County, any participating municipality, and any educational institution;

(6) promote the use and benefits of community media and any community media engagement platform;

(7) produce and distribute local community media, including community news, programs and other media content; and

(8) undertake any other community media-related activity specified by the County as being in the public interest.

(d) A community media organization must:

(1) determine independently in the public interest and without government interference the content and scheduling of programming for any community media engagement platform;

(2) develop and implement policies to ensure fair, non-partisan, and unbiased coverage of issues on any community media engagement

platform and may not promote the candidacy of any candidate for public office by extending opportunities for use not extended to other candidates for the same office;

(3) develop and implement policies and programs that promote organizational sustainability and viability;

(4) promote and encourage creation of community media content representing a diversity of community interests and needs; [and]

(5) make a good faith effort to meet the affirmative action and minority, female, and disabled procurement goals that apply to County government; and

(6) adopt a racial equity and social justice policy that applies a racial equity and social justice lens into all aspects of the organization's operations. The policy must include:

(A) a statement of commitment to racial equity and social justice as part of the organization's core values;

(B) active recruitment of potential board members from diverse backgrounds and outreach to communities of color;

(C) a formal process to assess organizational culture and identify barriers to inclusion in board participation and leadership;

(D) communications and business practices that are tailored to the needs of communities of color and other marginalized communities;

(E) a process to identify and address discriminatory or non-inclusive behaviors;

(F) organizational policies and procedures that address diversity and inclusion; and

(G) a clear, realistic, actionable, and measurable commitment to addressing racial equity that is woven into the governance and culture of the community media organization.

[(e) Any officer, director, or executive director of a community media organization must annually disclose, confidentially and in writing, any communications-related activity or interest to the governing board of directors for the community media organization.**]**

[(f)**]** (e) A community media organization must provide a copy of its current articles of incorporation and bylaws to the County Executive and the County Council before the organization contracts with the County. Any proposed amendments must be submitted to the County Executive and County Council for review and comment at least 60 days before the organization takes final action on the amendment. The organization must submit a copy of all adopted amendments to the Executive and the Council within 5 working days of adoption. The organization's articles of incorporation and bylaws are subject to all County laws, including those enacted after the County contracts with the organization.

(f) To be eligible for a contract with the County under this Section, a community media organization must:

(1) include on its board of directors up to 7 voting members who must be residents of the County, including:

(A) at least one member who is nominated by the County Council; and

(B) at least one member who is nominated by the County Executive;

(2) require each board member to file a financial disclosure statement with the Ethics Commission under Chapter 19A, as amended;

(3) provide training to its board of directors regarding ethical and fiduciary responsibilities; and

(4) adhere to the requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act, as amended, and the Maryland Public Information Act, as amended, as if the organization were a public body under those Acts.

(g) A community media organization must provide the County with:

(1) regular and complete financial reports as well as all other reports required under its contract with the County**[**.**]**; and

(2) **[**In addition, it must provide the County with**]** an annual independent audit, including a copy of any accompanying management letter.

Cable Communications - Community Media Organizations - Requirements
Councilmember Kate Stewart

Purpose:

This legislation is intended to improve the governance structure of community media organizations in the county. The legislation aligns community media governance structures with comparable local community media organizations in the region and country, as we as align with structure and requirements of similar organizations in the county.

The bill would:

- Require a community media organization that contracts with the County to adopt a racial equity and social justice statement;

- Require a community media organization that contracts with the County to include members nominated by the County Council and County Executive on the organization's board of directors; and

- Require a community media organization that contracts with the County to follow certain standards of public ethics and public access

Background:

A 2023 OLO report and multiple discussions at the GO Committee with media organizations supported by county Cable Fund dollars (including MCT/MCM, MCPS-TV, and MC-TV at the College) have indicated the urgent need to change the funding and oversight structure of these organizations as cable funds rapidly dwindle. The report also acknowledges there is overlap between the public media activities of these organizations.

Currently, each organization receives direct cable funds that are distributed to them by TEBS, and MCT/MCM also receives county contractual grant funding.

During last's year budget, the FY26 Budget Resolution under the section for "Cable Communication Plans" reads:

> *"Future Cable Plan strategy: The Executive must submit to the County Council's Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee a Strategic Plan that will frame the FY2027 budget allocations from the Cable Fund."*

On February 19, 2026 the GO Committee reviewed a Strategic Plan provided by the TEBS regarding next steps for managing the funds and the County's cable stations. The plan outlines the direction the Executive branch will take regarding the Cable Fund and its distributions to entities in FY27 and beyond. However, the Committee was left with many unanswered questions about how the changes would be implemented.

During this year's budget process, the full Council decided to maintain the current funding and governance pending more specific planning for community media governance post-transition.

As the Executive's office and the community media organizations work on a new governance structure, the current legislation is intended to update the structure and requirements for a community media organization in the county. This legislation requires one of the seven board members to be appointed by the Council and one by the Executive, requires the organization to have an RESJ statement and policy governing the board and services the organization provides for our diverse community, and requires the organization's board to meet as a public body and comply with public records, open meetings, and ethics laws.

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

BILL 33-26: CABLE COMMUNICATIONS - COMMUNITY MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS - REQUIREMENTS

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 33-26 would have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Requiring community media organizations that contract with the County to develop a detailed RESJ policy as proposed in Bill 33-26 could help ensure they are advancing RESJ in their efforts.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is essential to achieve RESJ.[1] This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.[2]

PURPOSE OF BILL 33-26

County law allows the County to contract with community media organizations to provide services that help engage and inform the community.[3] Currently, the County contracts with Montgomery Community Media (MCM) for these services. With funding support from the County, MCM:[4]

- Operates two community media channels on cable television (Access 19 and Montgomery Channel 21);
- Provides media, television production, and technology training to County residents and community organizations; and
- Produces independent, diverse, and informative cable programming for County residents.

The purpose of Bill 33-26 is to update requirements for community media organizations that contract with the County. Currently, this applies to MCM. If enacted, Bill 33-26 would require a community media organization to:[5]

- **Adopt a racial equity and social justice (RESJ) policy.** The policy would have to apply a RESJ lens into all aspects of the organization's operations. It would have to outline specific information, such as communications practices to meet the needs of communities of color and organizational policies that address diversity and inclusion. Figure A in the Appendix includes the full list of requirements for the RESJ policy.
- **Meet certain requirements for its board of directors.** The organization's board of directors would have to include up to seven voting members who are County residents. At least one member would have to be nominated by the County Council and one by the County Executive. The board would also have to meet publicly and comply with public records, open meetings, and ethics laws.

According to its lead sponsor, Bill 33-26 aims to "align community media governance structures with comparable local community media organizations in the region and country."[6]

The Council introduced Bill 33-26 on July 28, 2026.

This RESJIS builds on the one for Bill 4-26, Buildings – Task Force on Data Centers – Established, published in February 2026, which provides racial equity context on community engagement and boards, committees, and commissions (BCCs).[7]

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

The media is a powerful institution. It conveys narratives that reflect, influence, and challenge a society's culture, values, and worldviews.[8] These forces shape policies and institutions. As Race Forward explains, "[c]ultural change precedes social change. Narrative drives policy…Narrative is the space in which energies are activated to preserve a destructive system or build a better world for us all."[9]

To consider the anticipated impact of Bill 33-26 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

All community members, regardless of race or ethnicity, could benefit from proposed changes to the governance structure of community media organizations that contract with the County. These could help improve transparency and accountability in their operations to the community.

As previously noted, Bill 33-26 would require community media organizations to adopt and implement a RESJ policy. Figure A includes the text of the RESJ policy within the Bill. Proposed requirements for the RESJ policy of community media organizations include:

- Active recruitment of potential board members from diverse backgrounds and outreach to communities of color;
- Communications and business practices tailored to the needs of communities of color and other marginalized communities; and
- Organizational policies and procedures that address diversity and inclusion, among others.

Requiring community media organizations to develop a detailed RESJ policy as proposed in Bill 33-26 could help ensure they are advancing RESJ in their efforts.

Therefore, OLO anticipates Bill 33-26 would have a positive impact on RESJ in the County.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's RESJ Act requires OLO to consider whether to recommend amendments to bills that could reduce racial and social inequities and advance RESJ.[10] OLO anticipates Bill 33-26 would have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments. However, should the Council seek to improve the RESJ impact of this Bill, OLO offers one policy option for Council consideration:

- **Require community media organizations to develop a RESJ Action Plan as part of RESJ policy.** Specifically, the Council could require community media organizations to develop an action plan with priorities, goals and metrics for applying a RESJ lens to their media content (e.g. news articles, cable programming) and services (e.g., community media training, production services). This plan could incorporate resources such as the Journalism for Black Lives Reporting Guide from the Movement for Black Lives[11] and the Race Reporting Guide from Race Forward.[12]

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this RESJIS should be noted. First, predicting the impact of bills on RESJ is challenging due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJIS is intended to inform the Council's decision-making process rather than determine it. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

APPENDIX

Figure A. Bill 33-26 RESJ Policy Requirements for Community Media Organizations

A community media organization must adopt a racial equity and social justice policy that applies a racial equity and social justice lens into all aspects of the organization's operations. The policy must include:

(A) A statement of commitment to racial equity and social justice as part of the organization's core values;
(B) Active recruitment of potential board members from diverse backgrounds and outreach to communities of color;
(C) A formal process to assess organizational culture and identify barriers to inclusion in board participation and leadership;
(D) Communications and business practices that are tailored to the needs of communities of color and other marginalized communities;
(E) A process to identify and address discriminatory or non-inclusive behaviors;
(F) Organizational policies and procedures that address diversity and inclusion; and
(G) A clear, realistic, actionable, and measurable commitment to addressing racial equity that is woven into the governance and culture of the community media organization.

Source: Bill 33-26, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, pgs. 4-5.

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[1] Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from M. Gamblin et al., "Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs," Bread for the World and Racial Equity Tools.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Montgomery County Code Sec. 8A-32.
[4] Cable Television Communications Plan – Montgomery Community Media Program, Montgomery County MD Operating Budget.
[5] Bill 33-26, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, Montgomery County Council, Introduced July 28, 2026.
[6] Councilmember Kate Stewart, Cable Communications – Community Media Organizations – Requirements, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, pg. 10.
[7] RESJIS for Bill 4-26, Office of Legislative Oversight, February 5, 2026.
[8] "Working with the Media," Racial Equity Tools.
[9] N. Viquiera, "Messages to Grow and Uproot: Narrative Strategy Amid Attacks on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice," Race Forward, pg. 2.

[10] Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council.
[11] "Journalism for Black Lives: A Reporting Guide," Movement for Black Lives.
[12] "Race Reporting Guide," Race Forward.

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

BILL 33-26: CABLE COMMUNICATIONS – COMMUNITY MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS - REQUIREMENTS

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Bill 33-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing changes to contract requirements for local community media organizations.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF BILL 33-26

County law allows the County to contract with community media organizations to provide services that help engage and inform the community.[1] Currently, the County contracts with Montgomery Community Media (MCM) for these services. With funding support from the County, MCM:[2]

- Operates two community media channels on cable television (Access 19 and Montgomery Channel 21);
- Provides media, television production, and technology training to County residents and community organizations; and
- Produces independent, diverse, and informative cable programming for County residents.

The purpose of Bill 33-26 is to update requirements for community media organizations that contract with the County. Currently, this applies to MCM. If enacted, Bill 33-26 would require a community media organization to:[3]

- **Adopt a racial equity and social justice (RESJ) policy.** The policy would have to apply a RESJ lens into all aspects of the organization's operations. It would have to outline specific information, such as communications practices to meet needs of communities of color and organizational policies that address diversity and inclusion. Figure A in the Appendix includes the full list of requirements for the RESJ policy.
- **Meet certain requirements for its board of directors.** The organization's board of directors would have to include up to seven voting members who are County residents. At least one member would have to be nominated by the County Council and at least one by the County Executive. The board would also have to meet publicly and comply with public records, open meetings, and ethics laws.

According to its lead sponsor, Bill 33-26 aims to "align community media governance structures with comparable local community media organizations in the region and country."[4]

The Council introduced Bill 33-26 on July 28, 2026.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill is proposing changes to contract requirements for local community media organizations, OLO anticipates Bill 33-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions and community climate resilience.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.[5] OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Bill 33-26 is likely to have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions and community climate resilience.

CAVEATS

OLO notes two caveats to this climate assessment. First, predicting the impacts of legislation upon climate change is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and the broad, global nature of climate change. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to inform the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on the County's contribution to addressing climate change. These climate assessments will provide the Council with a more thorough understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed legislation, at the County level. The scope of the Climate Assessments is limited to the County's contribution to addressing climate change, specifically upon the County's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and how actions suggested by legislation could help increase the County's community climate resilience.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how proposed County bills may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Kaitlyn Simmons drafted this assessment.

Figure A. Bill 33-26 RESJ Policy Requirements for Community Media Organizations

A community media organization must adopt a racial equity and social justice policy that applies a racial equity and social justice lens into all aspects of the organization's operations. The policy must include:

- A statement of commitment to racial equity and social justice as part of the organization's core values;
- Active recruitment of potential board members from diverse backgrounds and outreach to communities of color;
- A formal process to assess organizational culture and identify barriers to inclusion in board participation and leadership;
- Communications and business practices that are tailored to the needs of communities of color and other marginalized communities;
- A process to identify and address discriminatory or non-inclusive behaviors;
- Organizational policies and procedures that address diversity and inclusion; and
- A clear, realistic, actionable, and measurable commitment to addressing racial equity that is woven into the governance and culture of the community media organization.

Source: Bill 33-26, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, pgs. 4-5.

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[1] Montgomery County Code Sec. 8A-32.
[2] Cable Television Communications Plan – Montgomery Community Media Program, Montgomery County MD Operating Budget.
[3] Bill 33-26, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, Montgomery County Council, Introduced July 28, 2026.
[4] Councilmember Kate Stewart, Cable Communications – Community Media Organizations – Requirements, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, pg. 10.
[5] Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022

Bill 33-26, Cable Communications - Community Media Organizations – Requirements

Summary

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates that Bill 33-26 would have an insignificant impact on economic conditions in the County, as measured by the Council's priority economic indicators. The Bill would require community media organizations that contract with the County to adopt a racial equity and social justice (RESJ) policy and meet certain requirements for their board of directors. It is unlikely these changes would meaningfully impact these organizations in terms of the Council's priority indicators.

Background and Purpose of Bill 33-26

County law allows the County to contract with community media organizations to provide services that help engage and inform the community.[1] Currently, the County contracts with Montgomery Community Media (MCM) for these services. With funding support from the County, MCM:[2]

- Operates two community media channels on cable television (Access 19 and Montgomery Channel 21);
- Provides media, television production, and technology training to County residents and community organizations; and
- Produces independent, diverse, and informative cable programming for County residents.

The purpose of Bill 33-26 is to update requirements for community media organizations that contract with the County. Currently, this applies to MCM. If enacted, Bill 33-26 would require a community media organization to:[3]

- **Adopt a racial equity and social justice (RESJ) policy.** The policy would have to apply a RESJ lens into all aspects of the organization's operations. It would have to outline specific information, such as communications practices to meet needs of communities of color and organizational policies that address diversity and inclusion. Figure A in the Appendix includes the full list of requirements for the RESJ policy.

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[1] Montgomery County Code Sec. 8A-32.
[2] ii Cable Television Communications Plan – Montgomery Community Media Program, Montgomery County MD Operating Budget.
[3] Bill 33-26, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, Montgomery County Council, Introduced July 28, 2026.

- **Meet certain requirements for its board of directors.** The organization's board of directors would have to include up to seven voting members who are County residents. At least one member would have to be nominated by the County Council and one by the County Executive. The board would also have to meet publicly and comply with public records, open meetings, and ethics laws.

According to its lead sponsor, Bill 33-26 aims to "align community media governance structures with comparable local community media organizations in the region and country."[4]

The Council introduced Bill 33-26 on July 28, 2026.

Information Sources, Methodologies, and Assumptions

As required by Section 2-81B of the Montgomery County Code, this Economic Impact Statement evaluates the impacts of Bill 33-26 on residents and private organizations, using the Council's priority economic indicators as the measure. In doing so, it examines whether the Bill would have a net positive or negative impact on overall economic conditions in the County.[5]

OLO does not anticipate that requiring community media organizations that contract with the County to adopt a RESJ policy and meet certain requirements for their board of directors would meaningfully impact these organizations in terms of the Council's priority economic indicators. Therefore, the Bill is expected to have an insignificant economic impact.

Variables

Not applicable

Impacts

WORKFORCE ▪ TAXATION POLICY ▪ PROPERTY VALUES ▪ INCOMES ▪ OPERATING COSTS ▪ PRIVATE SECTOR CAPITAL INVESTMENT ▪ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ▪ COMPETITIVENESS

Not applicable

Discussion Items

Not applicable

[4] Councilmember Kate Stewart, Cable Communications – Community Media Organizations – Requirements, Introduction Staff Report for Bill 33-26, pg. 10.
[5] Montgomery County Code, "Sec. 2-81B, Economic Impact Statements."

Caveats

Two caveats to the economic impact analysis conducted here should be noted. First, predicting the economic impacts of legislation is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, the multitude of causes of economic outcomes, economic shocks, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to *inform* the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the Bill under consideration.

Contributions

Stephen Roblin, PhD (OLO) prepared this report.