

COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND
Legislative Session 2026, Legislative Day No. 16

Bill No. 84-26

Mr. Michael Ertel, Chair
By Request of County Executive
&
Councilmembers Mangione, Young, Marks, Jones & Crandell

By the County Council, September 8, 2026

A BILL
ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Commercial House Parties – Prohibition

FOR the purpose of establishing a prohibition on commercial house parties; providing for the scope of the prohibition; requiring a certain department to enforce certain prohibitions; establishing certain penalties; defining certain terms; and generally relating to commercial house parties.

BY adding

Sections 13-7-141, 13-7-142, 13-7-143, 13-7-144, 13-7-145, 13-7-146, and 13-7-147
Article 13 – Public Health, Safety, and the Environment
Title 7 – Nuisances
Subtitle 1 – General Nuisances on Private Property and on Public Roads

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.
[Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.
~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from bill.
Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

New Part V – Commercial House Parties
Baltimore County Code, 2015

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE
COUNTY, MARYLAND, that the Laws of Baltimore County shall read as follows:

ARTICLE 13 – PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Title 7 – Nuisances

Subtitle 1 – General Nuisances on Private Property and on Public Roads

Part V – Commercial House Parties

§ 13-7-141. LEGISLATIVE INTENT.

(A) (1) THE BALTIMORE COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS GENERALLY
RESTRICT COMMERCIAL USES IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES.

(2) COMMERCIAL USES ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES ARE LIMITED
TO THOSE EXPRESSLY PERMITTED UNDER THE ZONING REGULATIONS BY-RIGHT
OR THROUGH A SPECIAL EXCEPTION.

(3) RESIDENTS ARE ENTITLED TO ENJOY THE USE OF THEIR
PROPERTY CONSISTENT WITH THOSE REGULATIONS.

(B) BALTIMORE COUNTY FINDS THAT UNPERMITTED COMMERCIAL
HOUSE PARTIES CAUSE SEVERAL ADVERSE IMPACTS, INCLUDING EXCESSIVE
NOISE, TRAFFIC CONGESTION, FIRE SAFETY VIOLATIONS, UNLICENSED SALE
AND SERVICE OF ALCOHOL, AND POOR CROWD CONTROL.

1 (C) THESE FACTORS LEAD TO PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS, INCLUDING TO
2 DISORDERLY CONDUCT, UNDERAGE DRINKING, POTENTIAL CRIMINAL
3 ACTIVITY, AND HINDERANCE OF RESPONSE BY EMERGENCY SERVICE AND
4 PUBLIC SAFETY VEHICLES.

5 (D) IN ORDER TO ENSURE AND PROTECT QUALITY OF LIFE AND PUBLIC
6 SAFETY IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS, THE PROVISIONS IN THIS PART ARE
7 NECESSARY.

8 (E) THE PROVISIONS OF THIS PART COMPLEMENT BALTIMORE COUNTY'S
9 UNRULY SOCIAL GATHERING ORDINANCE, IN PART IV OF THIS SUBTITLE, BY
10 PROVIDING ADDITIONAL TOOLS TO ADDRESS PARTIES HELD FOR PROFIT.

11
12 § 13-7-142. DEFINITIONS.

13 (A) IN THIS PART, THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
14 INDICATED.

15 (B) (1) "COMMERCIAL HOUSE PARTY" MEANS A GATHERING OR PARTY:

16 (I) FOR WHICH A FEE IS CHARGED BY THE PROPERTY OWNER
17 OR RESPONSIBLE PERSON FOR:

- 18 1. ENTRY;
19 2. PROVIDING, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, FOOD, DRINK, OR
20 ENTERTAINMENT; OR
21 3. A COMBINATION OF FOOD, DRINK, OR
22 ENTERTAINMENT;

23 (II) HELD ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY; AND

(III) ADVERTISED OR PROMOTED TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS
A COMMERCIAL PARTY, EVENT, ASSEMBLY, OR GATHERING, INCLUDING
THROUGH TRADITIONAL MEDIA, NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINES, FLYERS, HANDBILLS,
TELEVISION COMMERCIAL, RADIO ADVERTISEMENT, OUTDOOR ADVERTISING,
DIRECT MAIL, BLOGS OR SOCIAL MEDIA, ELECTRONIC MAIL, WEBSITES, OR TEXT
MESSAGES.

(2) "COMMERCIAL HOUSE PARTY" INCLUDES SUCH A GATHERING
OR PARTY AT A POOL, YARD, OR OTHER AREA LOCATED AT A RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY.

(C) (1) "PROPERTY OWNER" MEANS ANY PERSON WHO OWNS A
PROPERTY OR HAS CHARGE, CARE, OR CONTROL OF A PROPERTY AS A LEGAL
OWNER, OR, IF APPLICABLE, AS A PROPERTY MANAGER OR MANAGEMENT
COMPANY.

(2) "PROPERTY OWNER" INCLUDES A LANDLORD.

(D) (1) "RESPONSIBLE PERSON" MEANS A PERSON WITH A RIGHT OF
POSSESSION OF THE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY ON WHICH A COMMERCIAL HOUSE
PARTY IS HELD, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL IS PHYSICALLY
PRESENT AT THE EVENT.

(2) "RESPONSIBLE PERSON" INCLUDES:

(I) THE PERSON WHO ORGANIZES OR SUPERVISES OR
CONDUCTS THE EVENT; OR

(II) ANY OTHER PERSON ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR
SUCH A GATHERING.

1 (E) "PRIVATE GATHERING" MEANS A SOCIAL, FAMILY, OR RECREATIONAL
2 GATHERING HELD ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY THAT IS NOT OPEN TO THE
3 GENERAL PUBLIC AND FOR WHICH THE PROPERTY OWNER OR RESPONSIBLE
4 PERSON DOES NOT IMPOSE A FEE OR OTHER CHARGE FOR ENTRY, FOOD,
5 BEVERAGES, OR ENTERTAINMENT.

6
7 § 13-7-143. SCOPE.

8 (A) PART V OF THIS SUBTITLE DOES NOT APPLY TO:

9 (1) A PRIVATE GATHERING, AS DEFINED IN THIS PART V;

10 (2) A PRIVATE GATHERING WHERE THE OWNER OR LEASEHOLDER
11 OF THE APARTMENT OR CONDOMINIUM RESERVES OR LEASES A COMMON AREA
12 THAT IS APPROVED BY THE OWNER OF THE COMMON AREA;

13 (3) A GATHERING INTENDED PRIMARILY TO RAISE FUNDS FOR A
14 NONPROFIT, RELIGIOUS, OR POLITICAL ORGANIZATION THAT:

15 (I) QUALIFIES AS A 501(C)(3) OR OTHER TAX-EXEMPT STATUS
16 UNDER THE U.S. INTERNAL REVENUE CODE, AS AMENDED, OR IN ACCORDANCE
17 WITH APPLICABLE ELECTION LAWS; AND

18 (II) IS READILY IDENTIFIED, AT THE EVENT AND ON
19 PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS, AS AN EVENT SPONSOR; OR

20 (4) AN EVENT THAT IS PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 21-9-106
21 OF THE CODE.

22 (B) AN EVENT, USE, OR ACTIVITY THAT IS EXPRESSLY PERMITTED BY THE
23 BALTIMORE COUNTY ZONING REGULATIONS OR AUTHORIZED BY A SPECIAL

1 EXCEPTION, VARIANCE, PERMIT, OR OTHER APPROVAL ISSUED PURSUANT TO
2 THOSE REGULATIONS.

3
4 § 13-7-144. COMMERCIAL HOUSE PARTIES.

5 (A) A COMMERCIAL HOUSE PARTY IS PROHIBITED.

6 (B) A PERSON MAY NOT PROMOTE, ORGANIZE, OR HOST A COMMERCIAL
7 HOUSE PARTY ON RESIDENTIAL ZONES OR PROPERTY.

8 (C) IF THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON IS A JUVENILE, THEN THE JUVENILE AND
9 THE PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS OF THE JUVENILE MAY BE JOINTLY AND
10 SEVERALLY LIABLE FOR CIVIL PENALTIES OR OTHER COSTS.

11 (D) A PERSON MAY NOT ATTEND OR REMAIN AT A COMMERCIAL HOUSE
12 PARTY ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AFTER BEING NOTIFIED BY LAW
13 ENFORCEMENT THAT:

14 (1) THE GATHERING CONSTITUTES A COMMERCIAL HOUSE PARTY
15 THAT VIOLATES PART V OF THIS SUBTITLE; AND

16 (2) THAT THE PERSON IS DIRECTED TO LEAVE THE PROPERTY.
17

18 § 13-7-145. ENFORCEMENT.

19 PART V OF THIS SUBTITLE SHALL BE ENFORCED BY THE BALTIMORE
20 COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT.

21
22 § 13-7-146. PENALTIES.

1 IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER APPLICABLE CIVIL OR CRIMINAL PENALTIES,
2 A PERSON WHO VIOLATES PART V OF THIS SUBTITLE IS GUILTY OF A
3 MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION FOR A VIOLATION IS SUBJECT TO:

4 (1) FOR THE FIRST VIOLATION, A FINE NOT TO EXCEED \$2,500; AND

5 (2) FOR THE SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT VIOLATIONS WITHIN A
6 PERIOD OF 24 MONTHS FROM THE DATE OF THE PRIOR VIOLATION, A FINE NOT
7 TO EXCEED \$5,000.

8
9 § 13-7-147. WHEN NOTICE OF VIOLATION IS NOT REQUIRED.

10 A NOTICE OF VIOLATION IS NOT REQUIRED PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF
11 THE CITATION.

12
13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, that this Act, having been passed by
14 the affirmative vote of five members of the County Council, shall take effect immediately from
15 the date of its enactment.