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GIORDANO VETOES NURSING HOME BILL, CITING GOVERNMENT OVERREACH AND SERIOUS LEGAL CONCERNS

Wicomico County Executive Julie Giordano last night vetoed Emergency Legislative Bill No. 2026-11, saying the legislation goes far beyond reasonable oversight and instead creates serious legal, financial, personnel, and operational concerns for the Wicomico County Nursing Home and County taxpayers.

“This bill is not simply about oversight. It fundamentally changes who operates the Nursing Home and inserts the legislative branch directly into personnel and day-to-day operational decisions,” Giordano said. “That is not responsible oversight. It creates competing chains of command, unnecessary legal uncertainty, and potentially significant new liability for County taxpayers.”

The legislation declares that Wicomico County shall “hold and operate” the Nursing Home, despite the facility historically operating with its own administrator, employees, finances, policies, and regulatory responsibilities. The bill does not adequately address what that change could mean for employment status, benefits, retirement obligations, procurement, contracts, insurance, regulatory liability, or other financial obligations. No fiscal analysis was provided identifying the potential cost to taxpayers.

The bill also gives the County Council direct authority over the Nursing Home Administrator, including the ability to participate in terminating the Administrator, while simultaneously requiring the Administrator to report through the executive branch. Giordano said that structure blurs the fundamental distinction between legislative oversight and executive administration and creates serious governance concerns.

“The County Council is the legislative branch of government. Its responsibility is to legislate, establish policy, approve appropriations, and exercise appropriate oversight, not place itself inside the operational chain of command of a regulated health care facility,” Giordano said.

Giordano also questioned why such sweeping; permanent changes were introduced as emergency legislation. The bill establishes a new County Code chapter, permanent commission, personnel system, reporting requirements, and new governmental authority over the Nursing Home Administrator.

“You do not fundamentally restructure the governance of a nursing home through emergency legislation without fully understanding the legal, regulatory, personnel, and financial consequences,” Giordano said. “The residents and employees of this facility deserve stability—not political micromanagement and governmental confusion.”

Giordano emphasized that her veto does not mean opposition to accountability. She remains willing to work with the Council on a properly structured advisory commission, stronger financial reporting, regular reporting to County government, and other reasonable accountability measures.

“Accountability and oversight are appropriate. Government overreach is not,” Giordano said. “Our residents deserve professional management, regulatory compliance, stability, and decisions centered on their care. That must remain our priority.”