



Brandon M. Scott
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SB 987

February 25, 2020

TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: The Honorable Brandon M. Scott, President of the Baltimore City Council

RE: SENATE BILL 987 – Racing and Community Development Act of 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

I write to you in **support** of Senate Bill 987. Through improvements to racing facilities and the surrounding community, this important bill will ensure that the Preakness continues to be run in Baltimore City.

I grew up in Park Heights, one of the neighborhoods surrounding the Pimlico Racetrack. Growing up, I lived in the forgotten Baltimore. Park Heights was overlooked and ignored by City and State officials, and I have experienced firsthand, the disinvestment in my neighborhood. There is a desperate need for community redevelopment in this portion of Baltimore City. I am pleased that the Preakness will stay at Pimlico Racetrack, maintaining its rich and storied history in Baltimore. More importantly for me, I am glad that this bill will support much needed community redevelopment in the neighborhoods surrounding Pimlico.

I think of my grandmother who has lived in Park Heights for over 50 years and the positive impact this bill will have on her and the many others who have stayed in the area, in spite of hardships. These improvements to Pimlico will open it up to the surrounding communities and make it a place of activity and interaction year round, not just on one day a year. I am glad that the neighborhoods surrounding the Pimlico Racetrack are finally getting the attention that they deserve from the City and State. It is past time that they receive the investment desperately needed and deserved. Moving forward with this investment, it must be done inclusively and equitably, working hand in hand with the community to ensure their voices are an integral part of the work ahead.

I am optimistic that this bill to improve Maryland's racetracks and invest in surrounding neighborhoods will be the starting point for much needed change. It is my hope that in the future, we will look back on this moment and the people of Northwest Baltimore City will be able to say, "This is how Park Heights started to turn the tide."

As this bill will provide much needed community development and investment as well as maintains the Preakness in Baltimore, I urge you to move for a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 987.