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MAYOR

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HB 1010

March 5, 2020

TO: Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 1010 – Health Care Facilities—Discrimination (LGBTQ Senior Bill of Rights)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Pendergrass, Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1010.

In Maryland, approximately 4% of the population identifies as LGBTQ.¹ Of all LGBTQ adults in Maryland, 7% of them are over the age of 65, and this percentage is expected to increase over time.² LGBTQ Seniors are more likely to face discrimination due to the unique combination of their age and the fact that they belong to a minority group.³ Approximately 3 in 4 LGBTQ adults are concerned about having adequate support as they age and 1 in 3 of LGBTQ adults fear that they will have to hide their identity if they want access to suitable housing as they age.⁴

¹ Kastanis, Angeliki, et al. "LGBT Data & Demographics." *The Williams Institute*, 2018, <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/visualization/lgbt-stats/?topic=LGBT&area=24#demographic>.

² Ibid.

³ "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Aging." *American Psychological Association*, <https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/resources/aging>. Accessed 3 Mar. 2020.

⁴ Houghton, Angela. *Maintaining Dignity: Understanding & Responding to the Needs of Older LGBT Americans*. AARP Research, 26 Mar. 2018. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:10.26419/res.00217.004.

For these reasons, the LGBTQ Senior Bill of Rights will be imperative to protecting the rights of this vulnerable population. It protects LGBTQ seniors from some of their greatest fears of neglect, limited access to services, verbal or physical harassment, and hiding their identity.⁵ Health care facilities are meant to encourage wellness, and to do so, it is imperative that they respect the identities of all Marylanders.

We have all heard the troubling stories of people being discriminated against due to their identity, and for LGBTQ seniors, this discrimination remains an unfortunate reality at times as they navigate our health care system. The LGBTQ Senior Bill of Rights can provide significant protections for this vulnerable group.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 1010.

⁵ Houghton, Angela. *Maintaining Dignity: Understanding & Responding to the Needs of Older LGBT Americans*. AARP Research, 26 Mar. 2018. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, doi:[10.26419/res.00217.004](https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00217.004).