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MAYOR

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SB 407

February 12, 2020

TO: Members of the Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 407 – Office of the Attorney General – Senior and Vulnerable Adult Asset Recovery Unit

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Pinsky, and members of the committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 407.

The Baltimore City Health Department's Division of Aging and CARE Services houses the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, in which certified staff advocate on behalf of long-term care residents, usually residing in nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Baltimore City. The BCA supports SB 407 because it creates a separate enforcement unit within the Office of Attorney General to ensure vulnerable adults have an avenue for restitution.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman office receives frequent complaints of financial exploitation of older and/or vulnerable adults residing in long-term care. These individuals are increasingly trapped in a cruel web of care providers, health care professionals, who purport to have their best interests at heart, but instead, act quickly to take control of their finances, medical care and ultimately their freedom. They typically assign themselves as the older adult's representative payee, which allows them complete control over the individual's finances and typically, they make financial decisions without the older adult's consent.

Historically, there has been no recourse for such financial abuse. Thus, the BCA strongly supports the creation of Asset Recovery Unit through SB 407 to protect seniors

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and vulnerable adults from financial crimes and possibly to provide restitution to those vulnerable adults who have been victimized.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 407.