

Pruski_Testimony HB971 FAV Senate.pdf

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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB971
Testimony by Delegate Andrew Pruski
March 25, 2025 – Senate Finance Committee

What the Bill Does:

HB971 Anne Arundel County Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park Advisory Committee establishes the Anne Arundel Crownsville Hospital Memorial Hospital Park Advisory Committee to provide advice on the planning of and to make recommendations regarding the Anne Arundel County Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park. It would codify the Crownsville Advisory Committee into Maryland State Code for a period of 5 years.

Why the Bill is Important:

Important background information: In December 2022, Anne Arundel County acquired the Crownsville Hospital property, formerly known as the “Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland”, from the State of Maryland. Following the acquisition, the County renamed the property the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park and began a master plan process to envision the future of the site as the green and healing heart of Anne Arundel County. At the same time, in recognition of the importance of public participation to this important and historical site, the County created the Crownsville Advisory Committee by Executive Order in September 2023 to act as an advisory body, make recommendations for uses of the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park, and collect and compile public input on public and prospective uses. The Advisory Committee has been a cornerstone piece of the master plan effort that launched in October 2023. The final master plan was released on February 15, 2025.

Those who are included in Anne Arundel Crownsville Hospital Memorial Hospital Park Advisory Committee are:

- A representative of the Office of the Governor, appointed by the Governor,
- The Executive Director of the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives or designee.
- The Executive Director of Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, or designee
- A member of the Senate who represents the district the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park is located, appointed by the President of the Senate
- 2 members of the House of Delegates who represent the district that Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park is located, appointed by the Speaker of the House

- Member of the Anne Arundel County Council who represents the district that Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park is located
- Representative from Bowie State University
- Anne Arundel County Budget Officer, or designee
- The Director of the Anne Arundel County Office of Equity and Human Rights, or designee
- Seven (7) members appointed by the Anne Arundel County Executive with expertise in cultural history, recreation and parks, infrastructure, health and wellness, communities adjacent to the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park, and civil rights.

HB971 will protect the vision for Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park and continue the work of the Anne Arundel County Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park Advisory Committee.

For these reasons, I urge a FAVORABLE report on HB971.

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March 25, 2025

House Bill 971
Anne Arundel County Crownsville Hospital
Memorial Park Advisory Committee
Senate Finance Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 971 – Anne Arundel County Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park Advisory Committee. This legislation would codify the Crownsville Advisory Committee in state law for a period of five years.

With the support of our delegation and the General Assembly, in December 2022, Anne Arundel County acquired the Crownsville Hospital property, formerly known as the “Hospital for the Negro Insane of Maryland”, from the State of Maryland. Following the acquisition, the County renamed the property the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park and began a master plan process to envision the future of the site as the green and healing heart of Anne Arundel County.

At the same time, in recognition of the importance of public participation to this important and historical site, the County created the Crownsville Advisory Committee by Executive Order in September 2023 to act as an advisory body, make recommendations for uses of the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park, and collect and compile public input on public and prospective uses. The Advisory Committee has been a cornerstone piece of the master plan effort that launched in October 2023 and will conclude with the release of the final master plan this month, and will continue to be a critical source of advice and recommendations as the county moves towards implementation and development.

House Bill 971 will protect the vision for Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park established in the forthcoming master plan through changes in administration at both the State and County level. HB 971 will also ensure that there is an annual reporting requirement to the County delegation so that all of our representatives stay apprised of progress and updates.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 971.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stuart Pittman", is written in a cursive style.

Stuart Pittman
County Executive

(Senate)GOCI _ FAV _ HB971 - AACo Crownsville Hosp

Uploaded by: Lawrence Walker

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**FAVORABLE TESTIMONY
HB971 - ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CROWNSVILLE HOSPITAL
MEMORIAL PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Lawrence E. Walker, Executive Director
Governor's Office of Community Initiatives**

March 25, 2025

Finance Committee

**The Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair
The Hon. Antonio Hayes, Vice Chair**

Good Afternoon Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and members of the Committee. My name is Rev. Lawrence Walker, I serve as the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. I am writing to express my strong support, with amendment, for HB971 - Anne Arundel County Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park Advisory Committee.

The creation of the Crownsville Hospital Memorial Park is a vital step towards acknowledging and addressing the complex history of Crownsville Hospital. This site holds significant historical and emotional weight for the community, particularly for those directly impacted by the hospital's troubled legacy. Establishing an advisory committee is crucial to ensuring that the park's development is guided by principles of:

- **Truthful Historical Representation:** The committee will be instrumental in ensuring that the park accurately and respectfully portrays the history of Crownsville Hospital, including its challenges and triumphs. This includes centering the voices of former patients, their families, and the African American community who were disproportionately affected by the hospital's operations.
- **Mental and Physical Well-being:** The park presents a unique opportunity to promote mental and physical health and well-being. The committee's recommendations will be vital in creating spaces and programs that foster healing and wellness, acknowledging the historical context of the site. In *Madness, Race and Insanity in a Jim Crow Asylum*, Antonia Hylton identified the manner in which our separate and unequal healthcare system has caused generational trauma, this committee can work towards generational healing.

- **Equitable Access:** Ensuring equitable access to the park for all residents is paramount. The committee's advice will be essential in developing strategies to remove barriers to access and create an inclusive environment.
- **Preservation of Natural Beauty:** The Crownsville site possesses natural beauty that should be preserved and integrated into the park's design. The committee can provide valuable input on sustainable development practices that protect the environment.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** In light of current and ongoing state budgetary concerns, the committee could help identify feasible goals, potential costs, and potential revenue streams.

I urge the committee to adopt a favorable report on HB971. Thank you for your time and consideration.