

City of Baltimore

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Councilwoman Phylcia R. L. Porter,

District 10

CHAIR: Public Health and Environment

MEMBER:

Labor and Workforce

Public Safety

Transportation and Land Use

February 23, 2026

Bill Title: HB1485: Public Health - Crisis Response System - Resources for Family Members and Trauma-Informed Care Training (Tiarra's Law)

Position: Favorable

To: Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, Health Committee

Dear Chair Bagnall and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony to express my strong support of HB1485, which is rooted in a simple but profound public health principle: when families experience crisis, our systems must respond not only medically, but humanely.

As a public health scientist, I know firsthand how deeply intertwined medical care and mental health are, particularly during moments of crisis. Too often, overdose cases are treated as criminal investigations, leaving families experiencing trauma with no immediate connection to emotional support. The Brown families' story exposed the gaps in our emergency system response and how the city of Baltimore approaches moments of crisis. This lack of immediate, emotional and psychological support often leaves families overwhelmed at a time when care and humanity are essential.

Baltimore City has already demonstrated leadership in addressing this gap through trauma-informed care with the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act in 2020, as well as the city's current Opioid Crisis Response. The opioid oversight hearings have convened city and state agencies, healthcare providers, and community advocates to identify systemic barriers, strengthen policy, and advance harm reduction strategies that support pathways to long-term recovery. This collaborative and solutions-oriented approach elevates the importance of HB1485 by placing the community back at the center of the work through measurable and accountable steps.

Maryland has taken meaningful steps toward trauma-informed care, and HB1485 builds on that commitment by affirming that healing begins with care, dignity, and compassion.

I respectfully urge the favorable passage of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phylcia R. L. Porter".

Councilwoman Phylcia Porter, MPH, MSL
Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov
Chair, Public Health and Environment Committee
Baltimore City Council - District 10