



Mission: *To improve public health in Maryland through education and advocacy*

Vision: *Healthy Marylanders living in Healthy Communities*

HB441, 509 – Baltimore City - Alcoholic Beverages

Hearing Date: 2/17/20

Committee: Economic Matters

Position: SUPPORT

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) would like to urge favorable reports on HB 441 and 509, two bills related to alcoholic beverages and licensing in Baltimore City. In conjunction with existing rules and regulations already in place, these two bills would improve licensing standards and practices to promote public health and safety. The goal of these bills is to create safer neighborhoods and communities throughout Baltimore City. The recommendations were drawn from substantial research and case studies and highlighted as best practices and complimentary to other regulations.

These bills come from extensive community-led action around liquor licenses and highlight loopholes and gaps in the regulatory system that makes it much more difficult to appropriately assess “bad actors” and to deliver appropriate penalties. **HB 509, Alcoholic Beverages Licenses, Grounds for Suspension**, focuses on allowing the liquor board to suspend a license under certain conditions to increase public safety surround the outlet. The liquor board may not be able to meet on a Friday or Saturday night, but this would allow them a temporary measure to protect the public.

HB 441, Alcoholic Beverages, Protest of License Renewal, Zoning Violations, eliminates another loophole in triggering a protest of an outlet, increasing the ability of community organizations to be engaged in the process of license renewal. Baltimore City is the only jurisdiction in the state which prohibits using zoning violations as a trigger for citizen protests of license renewals.

We urge a favorable report on this package of bills that will complement the existing regulatory structure in Baltimore City.

The Maryland Public Health Association (MdPHA) is a nonprofit, statewide organization of public health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of all Marylanders through education efforts and advocacy of public policies consistent with our vision of healthy Marylanders living in healthy communities. MdPHA is the state affiliate of the American Public Health Association, a nearly 150-year-old professional organization dedicated to improving population health and reducing the health disparities that plague our state and our nation.