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Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 6, 2020

**Testimony of Senator Antonio Hayes in Support of SB 310:
Baltimore City - Elections - Early Voting Centers**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

According to the current Maryland Election law 10-301.1., Baltimore City is required to maintain seven early voting centers available within the city limits for national, state and local elections. While the law allows for an optional eighth center within city limits, Baltimore City is not currently taking advantage of the eighth center.

Senate Bill 310 is being introduced this session for the purpose of establishing the requirement that Baltimore City creates eight early voting sites within the city limits. The bill also establishes that one early voting center be located at Frederick Douglass High School (2301 Gwynns Falls Parkway, Baltimore MD 21217), to the extent practicable. If not, the location shall be within a quarter mile radius of Mondawmin Metro Center.

In an area where many residents lack the means of private transportation, the Mondawmin Metro Center and Frederick Douglass High School are centrally located in Baltimore City and easily accessible via both public and private transportation options. Over 23,000 vehicles travel along the 2300 block of Gwynn Falls Parkway per weekday, including early voting days in November 2019. Frederick Douglass High School with five bus routes traveling along the block in question (26, 29, 79, 82, & Navy). There were an average of over 5,000 riders at the Mondawmin Bus Station each weekday for a total of 110,063, 107,536, and 106,976 in the month of November in 2017, 2018, and 2019 respectively.

The high school has two parking lots that can accommodate hundreds of people and is adjacent to over 1600 public parking spaces adjacent to the school at Mondawmin Mall, which has had

approximately 300,000 visitors in November over the past few years. The school is well equipped for community events and currently serves many community and alumni associations.

Establishing an eighth voting site near Mondawmin Metro Center and Frederick Douglass High School would ensure the voting capabilities of over 10,000 residents, who live within a half mile radius of the school. In a district where voter turnout has been relatively low, this bill would allow those without the means to private transportation to have the opportunity to vote in close proximity to their residence. **Senate Bill 310** will provide a more convenient option for Baltimore residents to exercise their right to vote.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 310.

Respectfully,



Senator Antonio L. Hayes
Chair, Baltimore City Senate Delegation
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