

**To: The Honorable Senator Paul G .Pinsky, Chairperson
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Matters Committee**

**From: Dr. Carl S. Barham, Co- Leader
Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team**

Re: Support for Senate Bill 464- Commemorative Days, *Maryland Voting Equity Reform Day*

Date: Monday, March 2, 2020

I am speaking on behalf of the Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team located in Dorchester County. Permit me to highlight and share with you **six reasons** why we strongly support Senate Bill 464.

- It confirms that the Right to Vote is a core value guarantee to us by the Constitution. Voting is the one opportunity that makes us equal as citizens. It is a great equalizer in our democratic society. Exercising this right will improve the quality of life for many citizens.
- It can serve as a reminder and motivator during election time to recommit ourselves in exercising the power of our vote.
- It provides a model that ten bold brave men, eight white and two Africans could work together to improve through the political process how to make our county and state a better place to live.
- It is a rich legacy that we can pass on to our children on how we fought for fairness and equal access to voting rights.
- It memorializes the work of the ten men by having erected in 1987 a 20,000-pound blue granite majestic monument in Dorchester County.
- It confirms that amending the Maryland Constitution in 1986 by changing from a system of **At Large Voting to District Voting** continues to increase minorities leadership and participation at the local, state and federal levels in the work force.

Finally. You are encouraged to google: **Freedom From Political Persecution and Tyranny**, more popularly known as the **Historical Freedom Shrine** to learn more about this historical event.

To: The Dorchester County Delegation
From: Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team
Re: Justification for the Maryland Voting Equity Reform Day
Date: December 18, 2016

Maryland Voting Equity Reform Day

“An idea whose time has arrived.”

The Dorchester County Delegation is working in concert with the **Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team**, to support and to establish the **Maryland Voting Equity Reform Day**. The Delegation will request a House Resolution to be presented on the House Floor during the 2017 Legislative Session. Our Senator will also request a Senate Resolution on the Senate Floor.

The justification for the annual Maryland Voting Equity Reform Day presented by the Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team is as follows:

- It is written as a text on the base of the monument in 1987, “Lest we forget” what historical political event that occurred here. More than a quarter of a century later, the answer is “Yes” we did forget.
- The Maryland Constitution was amended in 1986, because the previous one disenfranchised minority citizens and rural citizens regarding fair voting rights. They were disenfranchised for more than one hundred thirty five years.
- During the process and time for amending the Constitution, no property or lives were lost from negative political backlash.
- The Maryland Monument for Voter Reform: The Historical Freedom Shrine is the only monument memorializes ten local men, whose efforts led to statewide reform in local elections.
- North Dorchester is the Birthplace of Maryland Voter Reform.
- A forty thousand pound blue granite monument was erected on November 10, 1987 to commemorate ten men, and the political events that led up to changes in voting practices in Maryland.
- Amending the Constitution provided voting equity to all citizens of the counties in Maryland.

At the Maryland Legislative session in 1986, there were House Bill 37 and House Bill 38 co-sponsored by Delegate John W. Douglass and posthumously Senator James Clark to amend the Constitution. HB 37 provided political equity for all of Maryland citizens. HB 38 addressed the implementation phase of the bill.

The Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team is planning activities and events for the remainder of 2016 and into 2017. The goal is to increase public awareness and appreciation of our rich political and cultural history.

