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## **FAVORABLE RESPONSE**

### **HB380 – Investigatory Records Isabel Mercedes Cumming, Inspector General**

The concept of Inspector General is one that has been around since 2005 in Baltimore City, however having an independent Inspector General has only been in existence since December 2018. The Citizens of Baltimore City voted 83% in favor of making the Office independent. Since that time – between January 2019 and January 2020 – my office has identified over \$1,450,000 in waste. My team has completed 21 report and 19 management alerts. The number of hotline complaints this last year was 636 – a far cry from the 70 in 2017.

HB380 is providing equality by simply giving the same protections to our complainants that exists for the State’s Attorney’s office or the Attorney General’s office. The House already gave such powers to the future State-wide Education Inspector General because of their understanding of how important it is to protect confidential information during active investigations. This bill is important to aid the local IG’s including my office protect the identity of the complainant. Protection to complainants and whistleblowers is of paramount importance to my office and other IG offices.

As stated by others, this bill would not modify the disclosure requirements. It would simply add the Inspector General to the existing list of government agencies that have the ability to protect confidential information during an active investigation. HB380 would provide clarity and an equal investigative field for all IG’s in Maryland. I strongly recommend the passage of this bill.

#### ***REPORT FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE***

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