

TO: The Honorable Delegate Christopher Adams
House and Government Operation Committee

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

Re: Support for House Bill 950- Commemorative Days, *Maryland Voting Equity Reform Bill*

Date: Monday, March 7, 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 **House Bill 950**.

- 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 African Americans 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.