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MAYOR

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SB 205

January 30, 2020

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 205 – Public Safety - Crime of Violence - Witness Intimidation

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 205.

If enacted, SB 205 would add felony witness intimidation under §§ 9-302, 9-303, and 9-305 of the Criminal Law Article to the definition of a "crime of violence" under § 5-101 of the Public Safety Article. Practically, the BCA understands that the impact of this addition would mean that the various other statutory cross-references related to convictions of a "crime of violence" would automatically apply when one is convicted of felony witness intimidation. Given that this type of witness intimidation is already a felony under current law, the aims of SB 205 seem sensible and targeted in focus.

Witness intimidation is a problem in Baltimore City.¹ The BCA recognizes that the Baltimore City State's Attorney and her staff can only prosecute cases with evidence they are able to get admitted and presented to a factfinder at trial. Given the scope of the challenge, the BCA finds SB 205 to be a worthy and important tool to add to our prosecutors' toolbox.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 205.

¹ See, e.g., "Erasing Baltimore's stop snitching culture," Baltimore Sun Editorial Board, May 10, 2019, available at <https://www.baltimoresun.com/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-0510-stop-snitching-20190508-story.html> (Last accessed 1-16-2020).