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MAYOR

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SB 708

March 5, 2020

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings and Budget & Taxation Committees
FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 708 – Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund and Advisory Council - Alterations

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Vice Chair Rosapepe and Members of the Committees, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 708.

SB 708 requires the Governor to include \$10 million in the annual budget for the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund; requires the appropriation be composed of at least \$5 million in general funds; authorizes the fund be used for oversight, public outreach and education, and technical assistance and best practice education for grantees; and requires the executive director of the advisory council to oversee evaluations, among other provisions.

SB 708 provides a critical funding stream for evidence-based violence intervention and prevention programs. The Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program, created by legislation passed in 2018, opened an avenue for funding, though because it didn't mandate an appropriation, it left programs relying on it scrambling after funding was not included in the FY20 budget. By creating a mandated appropriation of \$10 million per year, and increasing the oversight requirements for the evaluation and awarding of funding, the bill will improve access to resources for programs that are effective but can have difficulty in securing dollars in competitive grant process.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 708.

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