



BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 76

January 21, 2020

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 76 – Criminal Procedure - Victims and Witnesses -
Restrictions on Release of Personal Information

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 76.

If enacted, HB 76 would authorize the victim of or witness to any crime or delinquent act, or also a victim's representative, to request the withholding of the address or telephone number of the victim, victim's representative, or witness before the trial or adjudicatory hearing. Current law only authorizes such requests in situations involving a felony or a delinquent act that would be a felony if committed by adult, so HB 76 is an expansion of the existing process.

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. Providing witnesses with the ability to have their addresses and telephone numbers be removed from publication for prior to the trial or adjudicatory hearings for any crimes or delinquent acts is a sensible expansion of the current law that should assist in the efforts for witnesses to feel comfortable to come forward.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 76.

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).