SB 477

February 4, 2021

TO: Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 477 – Enoch Pratt Free Library – Operating Hours and
             Funding

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised
that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 477.

Senate Bill 477 would remove the sunset on the mandate of an additional $3 million
annually from the State to fund additional operating hours for the Enoch Pratt Free
Library (Pratt). The City would continue to provide a 25% match – $750,000 – in funding
to further support the increased hours of operation.

The Pratt is an invaluable fixture in our City. SB 477 is pertinent to ensuring that our
students and residents continue to have increased access to the vital resources and
services the library system provides. We hope that the library can build on the growth
afforded to them with the extension of this funding by ensuring that all branches can
operate under additional hours with a commitment to equity and inclusion for the benefit
of all communities across the City.

Even during the pandemic, the Pratt has made great strides to provide programming and
resources for our communities. Without the mandated funding, the library would be
forced to reduce services and lay off workers at a time when the constituents of this City
need library access the most. Our communities would lose a level of access that they have
come to rely on. Ensuring equitable access to library resources and services, particularly
in poor and underserved communities, is a top priority for this Administration.

Accordingly, the BCA requests a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 477.