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TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer
Chief Counsel, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB0008: General Provisions – State Song – Repeal (**SUPPORT**)

There is no dispute that when James Ryder Randall wrote “Maryland, My Maryland” in 1891, he was expressing sympathy for the Confederacy and objecting to the Union troops who had entered Baltimore in the early days of the Civil War. Indeed, the song was used as a Confederate battle hymn and advocated the overthrow of the U.S. government. It is a reflection of our state’s racist past and must finally be retired. For years, the General Assembly has attempted to repeal and/or replace the State Song to no avail. This session, as the country experiences sustained protests against police brutality and systemic racism and just weeks ago witnessed the real horror of a hate-fueled riot on the U.S. Capitol, we can no longer afford to ignore this divisive anthem.

Senate Bill 8, Senator Kagan’s bill to repeal the State song, is a worthwhile and timely effort to banish “Maryland, My Maryland” to the dustbin of history.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of Attorney General urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 8.

cc: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee