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Finance Committee



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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Hayes in Support of Senate Bill 783: Baltimore City - West North Avenue Development Authority**

**March 16, 2021**

Dear Chairperson Kelley and Fellow Members of the Finance Committee,

The greater West North Avenue area is in dire need of revitalization. This community has great potential for economic development due to its geographical location and the inclusion of two major institutions of higher education in the vicinity. In addition, the 2015 uprising spurred on by the killing of Freddie Gray thrust this area and its inequities onto a national stage. Development of the West North Avenue region is long overdue.

It is our hope that the city and state stakeholders will be able to come together to create an overall vision for the future of West North Avenue. Impactful institutions such as Coppin State University and MICA have the potential to influence the development of the corridor. These institutions among others have the capacity to attract professionals to the area and increase the overall development of the region. The area has the potential to become a vibrant and economic boost for the surrounding community and all of Baltimore. What is needed to achieve this revitalization is strategic investment and oversight to ensure that the community benefits from such investment.

**SB 783** seeks to establish a West North Avenue Development Authority to work in coordination with certain residents in order to create a comprehensive neighbourhood revitalization strategy for the area and its buffer zone. The plan will be targeted at benefiting the residents, housing, neighborhoods, economic development, and the transportation of both pedestrians and vehicles.

Membership of the Authority will comprise representatives from a variety of sources. Membership or a designee will be granted to: A Senator and Representative representing the area, the Mayor of Baltimore, the Baltimore City Council, and the Governor of Maryland.

Membership status will also be granted to the Maryland Secretaries of the Department of Housing and the Department of Transportation or their designees, in addition to the Directors of the Baltimore City Departments of Housing, Transportation, and Planning. This combination of stakeholders will ensure that all due-diligence is granted.

Two of the major education institutions in the area will have a role on the Authority. The Development Authority Chair will be the President of Coppin State University and the Maryland Institute College of Art will be granted membership status. These anchor institutions are vital to the success of the area and it's future economic prospects.

The Authority will work in coordination with the citizens within the targeted zone and buffer zone, aimed at having a higher level of transparency and constituent controlled policies- ensuring that the investment will be in the people who need it most.

The Authority will be required to report it's strategy to the Appropriations and Budget and Taxation Committees in the House and Senate respectfully, as well as the office of the governor, by October 1st of 2023.

Thus, I urge a favorable report on SB 783.

Respectfully,



Senator Antonio L. Hayes  
40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District - MD