



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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March 9, 2021

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

RE: SB0735 – State Government – Notarial Acts – Remote Notarizations – **Letter of Support**

The Office of the Attorney General urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to favorably report Senate Bill 735, Senator West's commons-sense legislation to allow for the remote notarial witnessing of wills and other legal documents.

The Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force concluded in one of its recommendations (No. 24) for legislative action that we should make remote notarial services permanent beyond the current pandemic to best serve all Marylanders.¹ Indeed, the Task Force recommended that the General Assembly "[m]ake permanent the Governor's COVID-19 Executive Orders that allow for remote witnessing and notarizing certain life planning documents during the state of emergency."²

This legislation is designed to both realize that recommendation *and* to ratify, as lawful, any "notarization of any document in conformance with the provisions of Executive Order 20.03.30.04, authorizing remote notarizations, or Executive Order 20.09.29.01" ³ Both provisions should prove beneficial to all Marylanders in need of notarial services.

In conclusion, the Office of Attorney General urges a favorable report on SB 735.

cc: Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

¹ See MD. ATT'Y GEN. BRIAN E. FROSH'S COVID-19 ACCESS TO JUST. TASK FORCE, CONFRONTING THE COVID-19 ACCESS TO JUSTICE CRISIS 33 (Jan. 2021), https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/A2JC%20Documents1/AG_Covid_A2J_TF_Report.pdf.

² *Id.*

³ S.B. 735 at 5:22–27, 2021 Leg., 422d Sess. (Md. 2021).