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

FROM: The Office of the Attorney General

RE: SB 820 – Wills, Powers of Attorney, and Advance Directives - Electronic Execution –
Support

The Office of Attorney General urges this Committee a favorable report of SB 820. Senator West's Senate Bill 820 allows the electronic execution and remote witnessing for execution of wills, powers of attorney, and advance directives in certain circumstances.

Senate Bill 820 seeks to implement COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force's ("Task Force") recommendations.¹ The pandemic highlighted the need for "new policies [for easier] . . . virtual[] execution"² of wills, powers of attorney, and advance directives. In response, the Task Force recommended to codify "the Governor's COVID-19 Executive Orders that allow for remote witnessing and notarizing certain life documents during the state of emergency."³ And Senate Bill 820 does so.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report of Senate Bill 820.

cc: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

² *Id.*, at 33.

³ *Id.*