



Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

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MCAAHC

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March 8, 2022

Maryland State Appropriations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St., Annapolis

Dear Chair McIntosh and Vice-Chair Chang and members of
the Appropriations Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), I am writing to express our support of House Bill 1048 - The Senator Verda Welcome Act, which proposes \$1.6 million to be included in the annual budget for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture to increase the operational capacity of the Banneker-Douglass Museum as well as an appropriation of \$3 million to address the critical capital repairs the museum requires.

Founded at a time of civil unrest in the nation's history following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and fueled by decades of repressed anger and resentment over political, social, and economic injustices, the Commission has remained true to the vision of preserving and presenting Black history to inspire communities and help uproot racism in Maryland, which was established by its founder, Senator Verda Welcome. The Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM) was established to help carry out this vision.

With its outstanding exhibitions, youth conferences, and symposiums that make it a popular tourist attraction, the BDM is a source of great pride for the Commission. Programs designed for adults and children that allow for dialogue around social justice matters that continue to impact Black communities in Maryland make it a place that equips all Marylanders to tear down barriers to an equitable society. However, the current physical structure of the museum threatens all of this.

Suffering from years of neglect, the BDM is in critical need of capital repair that will cause further irreparable harm to this historic structure if not addressed. With the Maryland State Appropriations Committee's support of this bill, the State's official museum on African American history and culture will be strengthened, and its viability ensured.

I appreciate your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tamara Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Rev. Dr. Tamara E. Wilson,
Chair**