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House Appropriations Committee
March 8, 2022

HB1088: African American Heritage Preservation Program
- Annual Appropriation and Alterations

On behalf of the board and staff of Maryland Humanities, we submit this statement in favor of the African American Heritage Preservation Program - Annual Appropriation and Alterations (House Bill 1088) to increase the grant program from \$1 million to \$5 million per year.

For over 50 years, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) has authentically preserved and presented Black history and culture as a tool for racial equity, community empowerment, and social change. Their work includes operating the Banneker-Douglass Museum—the State's official Museum on African American History and Culture—and the African American Heritage Preservation Program grant (AAHPP), the State's million-dollar capital grant fund. The AAHPP provides critical grants to assist in preserving buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland.

Since 2010, MCAAHC has awarded nearly \$12 million dollars to more than 150 preservation projects in Maryland. In each of the past five years, MCAAHC has received an average of \$3.4 million in urgent requests but can only award \$1 million to meet these capital needs. It is critical to increase the African American Heritage Preservation Grant from \$1 million to \$5 million to address inflation and meet the statewide African American heritage sites' capital and non-capital funding needs.

At Maryland Humanities, we are focused on lifting up the entire sector of humanities statewide. We are excited for the potential growth of the AAHPP, as this change will strengthen the capacities of African American heritage sites. Not only will this allow a more complex, fuller history of Maryland to be preserved and explored statewide for years to come, but it will increase economic revitalization and community development throughout the state. It is my sincere hope that you will support this effort and vote yes on HB1088.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lindsey Baker".

Lindsey Baker
Executive Director