

# Written Testimony. SB953.pdf

Uploaded by: chanel compton

Position: FAV



## Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

84 Franklin Street, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-216-6180  
www.africanamerican.maryland.gov

### **MCAAHC**

Rev. Tamara E. Wilson, D. Min  
*Chair*

H. Russell Frisby, Jr., Esq.  
*Vice Chair*

Chanel Compton  
*Director*

#### **Commissioners**

Maya Davis

Janice Curtis Greene

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Reginald Turner

**March 24, 2022**

Maryland State Appropriations Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis

Dear Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) and the Banneker-Douglass Museum, I am writing to express our support of Senate Bill 953 – Commission on African American History and Culture- Alterations (Senator Verda Welcome Act) - to increase the grant program from \$1 million to \$5million per year, include in the annual budget \$1.6 million for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture to increase the operational capacity of the Banneker-Douglass Museum. In addition an appropriation of \$3 million to address the museum's urgent capital repairs.

For over 50 years, MCAAHC has been dedicated to preserving and celebrating African American history and culture in Maryland. As the nation's first state ethnic commission, which operates the state museum on African American history and culture, the Banneker-Douglass Museum, and the state's African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPP), the state's one-million-dollar capital grant, the Commission remains to this day unique as a national model.

The MCAAHC was founded in 1969 under the leadership of Maryland Senator Verda Freeman Welcome--the first Black woman senator in Maryland. Her vision was to develop a state commission to preserve and present Black history to inspire communities and help uproot racism in Maryland. The Commission established the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM) in Annapolis in 1984 to help carry out this vision. Today, the mission of the Commission and the Banneker-Douglass Museum is needed more than ever.

### ***Banneker-Douglass Museum's Work & Impact***

- For over 35 years, the Banneker-Douglass Museum has served as the State's official Museum on African American History and Culture.
- The museum serves as a tremendous resource in the State's preservation and presentation of Black history and culture and reaches over 50,000 people through its in-person and virtual resources.
- The museum annually presents outstanding exhibitions, youth conferences, and symposiums to amplify Black history, art, culture, and critical social justice causes impacting Black communities in Maryland. In addition, the museum produces programs such as after-school programs, racial equity community trainings, and professional development for teachers and heritage preservation.
- The Banneker-Douglass Museum is a National Preservation Site and a National Underground Network to Freedom site.
- The museum preserves over 12,000 artifacts and objects in its newly renovated collections and research facility and Maryland State Archives.
- The museum presents virtual and onsite tours of their exhibitions, collections, and programs to people of all ages and backgrounds.

### ***The Need***

**Banneker-Douglass Museum Operational and Capital Budget:** It is imperative to increase the Banneker-Douglass Museum's operating budget to \$1.6 million and address our \$3 million worth of capital repairs.

#### **Capital Repairs include but are not limited to:**

- **HVAC System:** Nearly 20 years old, the system has surpassed its life expectancy, indicated by its constant need for repair from malfunction.
- **Elevator Repair:** The main elevator is often offline, thus rendering the museum inaccessible to the public. Also, the service elevator is entirely offline.
- **Technology Upgrades to Facility**
- **Update Permanent Exhibit** to include additional Maryland Black history, art, and cultural milestones.
- **Restoration to Original Wood Floors:** The historic wing of BDM was once Mt. Moriah AME Church, built-in 1874. The original wood floors require repair/restoration.

### ***Operations***

The Banneker-Douglass Museum has been chronically under-resourced and staffed for years. The museum's operational budget needs to raise at a minimum of \$1.6 million. Increased funding towards staffing, exhibitions, public & youth programs, and collections management is imperative to their operations and growth. Increasing their budget to \$1.6 million will ensure that the Banneker-Douglass Museum's collection practices, exhibitions, and educational programming are sustained and thriving.

### ***The African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPP)***

The AAHPP, administered in partnership with the Maryland Historical Trust, provides grants across the state to preserve buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance

to the African American experience in Maryland. Since its inception in 2010, MCAAHC has awarded nearly 150 capital projects totaling over **\$12 million**. While this is an incredible accomplishment for the state, MCAAHC's capacity to award only \$1 million to address urgent capital needs means that the \$3.4 million (five-year average) requests go unanswered.

Therefore, to address the critical need to preserve African American sites, capital and non-capital, as important Maryland historical sites, and address inflation costs associated with preservation, it is crucial to increase the AAHPP grant from \$1 million to \$5 million. With the Maryland State Appropriations Committee's support of this bill, African American heritage sites (museums, historic homes, communities, schools, churches, and more) will be strengthened, which will substantially help revitalize communities economically throughout the state.

We hope the Budget and Taxation Committee will join us in investing in this effort.

Sincerely,  
***Chanel Compton***  
Executive Director

# **Testimony for SB 953 (002).pdf**

Uploaded by: Cory McCray

Position: FAV

CORY V. McCRAY  
Legislative District 45  
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Budget and Taxation Committee

*Subcommittees*

Vice Chair, Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,  
and Environment



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 24, 2022

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 953**  
**Commission on African American History and Culture – Alterations**  
**(Senator Verda Welcome Act)**

Dear Chair Guzzone and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

I write to urge you to **support** Senate Bill 953. It is crucially important that we invest in institutions that promote African American tradition and culture within the State of Maryland. Funding certain historical museums will assist in the preservation of history for future generations, so that they, too, understand the significance of African American history. This funding should be provided, in effect, through the implementation of Senate Bill 953.

State Senator Verda Freeman Welcome, the first Black woman senator in Maryland, founded the Banneker-Douglass Museum and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC). In 1969, one year after Martin Luther King's assassination, her vision was to develop a State commission to preserve and share Black history and help uproot and diminish racism in Maryland. The Commission established the Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis in 1984 to help carry out this vision. The museum serves as a tremendous resource, reaching over 50,000 people through its onsite and virtual programs. The museum annually presents outstanding exhibitions, youth conferences, and symposiums to amplify Black history, art, culture, and critical social justice causes impacting Black communities in Maryland. In addition, the museum produces programs such as after-school programs and trainings for museum professionals and teachers.

Under Senate Bill 953, the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) will become an independent unit within the Executive Branch. Additionally, it provides additional funding for the commission, the Banneker-Douglass Museum, and the African American Heritage Preservation (AAHP) Program. Increasing their annual operational budget and addressing their capital repairs will ensure that these museum's collection practices, exhibitions, and educational programming are sustained and thriving.

If enacted, Senate Bill 953 would take effect July 1, 2022, and will require that certain practices be adopted in accordance with the law.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 953. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory V. McCray".

Cory V. McCray  
State Senator, 45<sup>th</sup> District

# **COMMISSIONER EDWIN T JOHNSON MCAAHC WRITTEN TESTI**

Uploaded by: Edwin Johnson

Position: FAV





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**March 23, 2022**

Maryland State Appropriations Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis

Dear Chair Guzzone, and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

The following is presented on behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), and the Banneker-Douglass Museum to declare enthusiastic support of Senate Bill 953 – Commission on African American History and Culture- Alterations (Senator Verda Welcome Act) - to increase the grant program allocation from \$1 million to \$5 million annually, to include \$1.6 million in the annual budget for the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture in an effort to increase the operational capacity of the Banneker-Douglass Museum, as well as an appropriation of \$3 million to address the museum's critical need to address capital repairs.

MCAAHC is America's first state supported ethnic commission. Its establishment was truly a pioneering experiment. Thus far, the results have been overwhelmingly positive. MCAAHC has been the state's primary champion in ensuring that the African American experience in Maryland does not disappear from the state's history. While the work of MCAAHC is challenging, the Banneker-Douglass Museum, and the state's African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPP) provide invaluable tools for the MCAAHC to sustain success in executing its mission.


The MCAAHC was founded in 1969, and saw fit to established the Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM) in Annapolis in 1984. The AAHPP began its important work in 2012. It is imperative that this triple-threat to inaccurate narratives of Maryland's History receive support directly and proportionately aligned with its critical mission. Today, we are living in an age where History has become politicized to the point where licensed and certified educators are under extreme duress.

There has not been a more pivotal moment in our history regarding race relations and social justice since the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Understanding, appreciating, valuing and illuminating our diversity is central to the forward progress of our state, our nation, and our world. Knowing the contributions of African Americans supplies every Marylander with the irrefutable evidence that we all play a role in the advancement of the human race.

Therefore, to address the critical need, and further the work of MCAAHC, please support Senate Bill 953. We are living in a pivotal moment. Equip MCAAHC with the tools that it so desperately needs to continue to wage war on institutional racism, discrimination, and social injustice in the great state of Maryland.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of this month, we began an official state-wide observance and celebration of the bicentennial of the life and legacy of Harriet Tubman. Let Maryland continue on her path toward full diversity and inclusion. Please support Senate Bill 953.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edwin T. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey rectangular background.

Edwin T. Johnson, PhD  
Commissioner

**SB953. Written Testimony.Dr.Tamara Wilson.pdf**

Uploaded by: Tamara Wilson

Position: FAV



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**March 23, 2022**

Budget and Taxation Committee  
State Office Building  
11 Bladen St., Annapolis

Dear Chair Guzzone and Vice-Chair Rosapepe and members of the Budget and Taxation Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC), I am writing to express our support of Senate Bill 953 - 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, an appropriation of \$3 million to address the critical capital repairs the museum requires, and an increase of The African American Heritage Preservation Program from \$1 million to \$5million per year.

Senator Verda Freeman Welcome founded the Commission at a time of civil unrest in the nation's history following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and today over 50 years later the Commission has remained true to the vision of preserving and presenting Black history to inspire communities and help uproot racism in Maryland.

The Banneker-Douglass Museum (BDM) was established to help carry out this vision. Since its founding, it has become a popular tourist attraction known for its outstanding exhibitions, youth conferences, and symposiums. It has also become a very sacred place for adults and children to come and dialogue about social justice matters that continue to impact Black communities in Maryland. Citizens come from far and wide to learn strategies to tear down barriers and create an equitable and just society. The continuation of these initiatives is threatened by the critical capital repair needs of the museum.

Additionally, the Commission oversees the African American Heritage Preservation Grant (AAHPP), the state's one-million-dollar capital grant in partnership with the Maryland Historical Trust. This program provides grants that preserve buildings, sites, and communities of historical and cultural importance to the African American experience in Maryland. Since its inception in 2010, MCAAHC has awarded nearly 150 capital projects totaling over \$12 million. Yet, an average of more than \$3.4 million others has been denied.

The Commission has served as a national model for other ethnic Commissions. However, with its oversight of these two very important state treasures, the BDM and the AAHPP, the Commission stands as one of a kind.

Therefore, I humbly ask that you support this bill to address these critical needs to ensure that the public continue to have full access to African American heritage experiences in the state of Maryland.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara Wilson".

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