



Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

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MCAAHC

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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 10th 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', written in a cursive style.

Edwin T. Johnson, PhD
Commissioner