



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

FROM: Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.

RE: **Senate Bill 222 Baltimore City – Board of License Commissioners – Licensee Hours of Operation**

DATE: March 4, 2022

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Chair Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports with amendment** Senate Bill 222.

This bill is for the purpose of mandating that holders of class A, BD-7 and Adult Entertainment licenses within the area known as “The Block” close at 10:00 pm.

The Baltimore Police Department supports this bill with the recognition that it will provide one tool towards accomplishing our public safety goals. Partnership with businesses are critical to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and other Community Policing strategies — approaches that are incorporated throughout BPD’s crime plan. Research has shown that policies addressing certain business practices, such as the sale of alcohol or improving facades and camera coverage, can help to reduce crime. For that reason, BPD has previously supported legislation that would improve these types of business practices.

None of those bills were panaceas but we found them to be extremely helpful. Similarly, this bill will not address every or even most issues we as a Department faces. In fact, it won’t even address all of the issues we face on the Block. What it will do is reduce the opportunity for crime to occur by limiting the number of hours in which large amounts of people (some highly intoxicated) are spending in a very dense and congested area. Moreover, it will significantly reduce the amount of police resources that will be required on a daily basis to maintain a minimum amount of safety in that area.

The Central District has for years tried to work with the business owners of the Block to try to create safer conditions. Yet the deployment in this geography continues to be resource intensive. In addition to the disproportionate amount of resources that the Central District must dedicate to the area, often units from other parts of the city must be redeployed to the Block to ensure patrons’ safety as they are exiting the clubs.

It is our understanding that the 46th Delegation and the affected business owners have come to an agreement on a series of amendments that will make the bill less onerous for those businesses opting to comply with a series of requirements intended to ensure that they are taking proactive steps to mitigate the amount of negative and/or disruptive activity in and around the establishments. For instance, those who wish to remain open past 10 pm must submit an annual security plan that includes a number of provisions including the hiring of security personnel to be present at the licensed premises during all hours of operation; developing a plan for communication between the establishment and the BPD; providing the BPD with certain information about all of their security personnel on a quarterly basis; installation and maintenance of security cameras that have the capacity to record; retention of video from such cameras for at least 14 days; and production of footage when requested by the Baltimore Police Department. Moreover, the Board of Liquor Licensed Establishments will consider whether the establishment's management/ownership complied with the previous year's security plan when determining whether to approve the subsequent plan.

For these reasons, the BPD respectfully requests a **favorable with amendment report** on SB 222. Thank you for allowing us to comment on this important piece of legislation. If you should have any questions, feel free to reach me at michelle.wirzberger@baltimorepolice.org or via telephone at 443-915-3155.