



**Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville**  
**SUPPORT**  
**SB 368 – Municipalities – Charter Amendments – Notice**  
**February 8, 2022**

Good afternoon Chairman Pinsky and members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. I am Bridget Donnell Newton, Mayor of the City of Rockville, and I thank you for the opportunity to share the City's comments on SB 368. We are grateful to Senator Waldstreicher for sponsoring this important legislation.

The Rockville Mayor and Council strongly support SB 368 as this legislation would provide needed relief for the City and other municipalities faced with increasingly high costs to notice proposed Charter Amendments, public hearings on planning and zoning issues, budgets and other City business. It is unfortunate that no local print media has continued in Montgomery County and therefore the only option available to meet the noticing requirement is to place these legally required ads in a regional print newspaper which is quite expensive due to the limited options.

For FY22, Rockville has already spent almost \$10,000 on legal noticing costs and the small size of the ads placed in the newspaper's classified listings can be easily overlooked. SB 368 begins to address these issues by expanding charter amendment noticing options to include a copy of a fair summary of the proposed charter amendment delivered either by hand or mail once to every municipal residence. Under SB 368, the requirement can also be met by including the notice in a newsletter or any other regular municipal publication.

SB 368 is a welcomed improvement to a costly, antiquated, and inefficient process. The Bill supports greater transparency and community engagement and would permit Rockville and other municipalities to expend more of our taxpayer resources on high-quality programs and services. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide SB 368 with a favorable report and forward it to the House for a vote.