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MAYOR

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HB 441

February 8, 2022

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 441 - Criminal Procedure - Pretrial Release of Defendant - Notice

POSITION: Support

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill 441.

House Bill 441 requires the Office of the State's Attorney and the Court to provide notice to the arresting law enforcement agency within 48 hours of the release of a defendant before trial charged with certain violent crimes.

Baltimore City has recently suffered several high-profile tragedies committed by individuals released on home confinement while awaiting trial or under community supervision. This includes the high-profile deaths of Safe Streets leader Dante Barksdale and 69-year-old Evelyn Player. The suspect in Dante's murder had criminal cases in several Maryland counties and at the time of his arrest, he was also being sought on a warrant for cutting off his ankle monitor and absconding from home monitoring on a gun charge in Anne Arundel County. Ms. Player was stabbed to death in a church by a man who allegedly was under community supervision until recently before her murder. The senseless murders highlight the need to strengthen community supervision, improve inter-agency coordination, and increase oversight and transparency.

In cases where individuals charged with serious violent offenses are granted bail, law enforcement should be notified as these individuals are at an elevated risk for being involved in violence return to the community. This is especially important when an individual is arrested in a

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Maryland jurisdiction in which they don't reside – local law enforcement may not know this individual is returning to the community.

While it is uncommon for the Baltimore State's Attorney to ask for pre-trial release for individuals charged with serious violent crimes like murder or for a Baltimore City judge to consider bail for these serious offenses the results of existing safeguards failing are detrimental to addressing crime in the City and in the cases of Mr. Barksdale and Ms. Player are deadly.

Violence is not an unsolvable problem, but rather a public health crisis that is treatable and preventable through an intentional, coordinated, and sustained effort. This bill will ensure better coordination between the courts, state's attorneys, and city agencies.

For these reasons we respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 441.