

HB0805-APP-SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FWA



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HB0805

March 9, 2023

TO: Members of the House Appropriations Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 805 – Department of Human Services – Office of African American Affairs – Establishment
POSITION: **Support with Amendment**

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports with amendment** House Bill (HB) 805.

HB 805 establishes the Office of African American Affairs in the Department of Human Services and requires the Governor to include a certain appropriation in the annual budget bill for certain salaries of the Office. The Office of African American Affairs will bring together representatives from state and community organizations to create an informed strategic plan aimed at addressing the prominent issues facing African American residents of Maryland.

African American residents make up approximately 62% of Baltimore City, and almost one-third of Maryland's population overall.^{1,2} Historically discriminatory policies in housing, education, and health care have contributed to persistent inequalities many African Americans experience. Research has shown that adverse social and financial conditions are associated with poorer health outcomes.^{3,4} Social needs can include unstable housing, under resourced education, financial strain, transportation challenges, and health care access. Establishing the Office of African American Affairs will create a research-based convening entity that can bring together state and community level leadership to share best practices and make policy recommendations aimed at improving the well-being and health of African Americans in Baltimore City and Maryland.

We recommend the following amendment: on page 3, the represented entities should be amended to include the Maryland State Treasurer's Office, for the purpose of evaluating feasibility of policies such as baby bonds for lower income families.⁵

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable with amendment** report on HB 805.

¹ [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Baltimore city, Maryland](#)

² [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Maryland](#)

³ [PCORI-Social-Needs-Interventions-to-Improve-Health-Outcomes-Scoping-Review-Evidence-Map-Report.pdf](#)

⁴ [Berkowitz SA, Baggett TP, Edwards ST. Addressing Health-Related Social Needs: Value-Based Care or Values-Based Care? J Gen Intern Med. 2019 Sep;34\(9\):1916-1918. doi: 10.1007/s11606-019-05087-3. Epub 2019 Jun 10. PMID: 31183686; PMCID: PMC6712198.](#)

⁵ [CT Baby Bonds](#)

HB805_DHS_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Sledge

Position: FWA

Date: March 9, 2023

Bill number: HB 805

Committee: House Appropriations Committee

Bill title: **Department of Human Services – Office of African American Affairs**

DHS Position: **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to provide written support and recommendation for amendment to House Bill 805 (HB 805). DHS thanks Delegate Wells for her collaboration and consideration of proposed amendments and welcomes continued collaboration.

House Bill 805 would establish the Office of African American Affairs within DHS. The stated purpose of the Office would be to study the status of African Americans in Maryland and work with named and unnamed organizations to develop a strategic plan on addressing all forms of discrimination, including systemic and structural discrimination.

DHS believes the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives is the more appropriate placement for the Office of African American Affairs. The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives connects Marylanders to economic, volunteer, and human service opportunities through government, business, and nonprofit partners and conducts community affairs and engagement within the executive branch of Maryland government. Given the expressed intention and goals of the Office of African American Affairs DHS recommends that HB805 be amended to place the Office of African American Affairs within the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives. Additionally, the mandated appropriation of \$250,000 to be included in the Governor's budget to employ two staff members should be included in the budget for the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

The Department supports House Bill 805 if amendments are included in the Committee's report as recommended above. The Department is grateful to offer our support and collaboration on HB 805 and requests a favorable with amendments report.