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BILL NO.: HB 1104

TITLE: Voting Rights Act of 2023 - Counties and Municipalities

SPONSOR: Delegate Smith

COMMITTEE: Ways and Means

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

DATE: March 7, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS** House Bill 1104 – Voting Rights Act of 2023 - Counties and Municipalities. This legislation would enhance current protections for the right of every citizen of the State of Maryland to vote.

Voting is a sacred act of civic duty and a right that each and every citizen of this Country must be afforded. Unfortunately, as protections at the federal level have consistently come under threat, it is up to states and local governments to ensure all citizens continue to enjoy their constitutional rights. Baltimore County applauds the State for ensuring the proper protections for voters are in place, however, it cannot bear the fiscal burden of this legislation alone, and feels the bill would be made stronger if amended to include assistance from the State.

Costs associated with reimbursements to a complaining party, attorney and expert witness fees, and providing language assistance for voters could impose substantial costs on local governments who already devote numerous resources to the election process every two years. The County agrees that language accessibility and legal remedy to enforce voting rights are critical components to ensuring a fair election process, but asks that the State partner with its local jurisdictions to make sure these protections do not carry onerous fiscal consequences.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 1104. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.