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MAYOR

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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](#)