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Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Guzzone:

Baltimore SquashWise would like to express our strong support for Senate Bill 874, which would establish Community Safety Works as an ongoing program within the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Established as a budget initiative within the Department, Community Safety Works has already provided valuable assistance to nonprofit organizations, businesses and local governments through targeted investments in crime prevention that impact community safety.

SquashWise is transforming the former Greyhound bus terminal, located at 601 N Howard Street in downtown Baltimore, into a youth and community center. Since acquiring the building in 2021, we have dealt with ongoing vandalism, particularly graffiti tagging. The removal of such graffiti has proven to be costly to a nonprofit of our size and sometimes difficult to remediate. Because the Greyhound building is on the National Register of Historic Places, this historic designation often limits the types of cleaning products and methods that can be used. Our awarded grant from the FY23 Community Safety Works program will support the installation of security features and improved lighting to the exterior of the building – deterring vandalism and other crime from happening in the future and thereby making our facility a safer space for our youth participants and community members.

Again, this is to request a favorable report on SB874 to continue this valuable program. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abby Markoe".

Abby Markoe
Executive Director