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MAYOR

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SB 0598

February 22, 2023

TO: Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 598 – Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund - Appropriation

POSITION: Letter of Information

Chair Guzzone, Vice Chair Rosapepe, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration provides the below information regarding Senate Bill 598.

SB 598 would increase the annual minimum appropriation for the Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (VIPP) Fund from \$3 million to \$40 million, while removing the current annual appropriation ceiling of \$10 million. The \$40 million investment was based on recommendations from national experts in violence prevention. This program has historically been underfunded, and the expanded commitment to VIPP infrastructure would be beneficial toward ensuring adequate support for violence intervention and prevention efforts across the state, particularly in Baltimore City and other areas disproportionately affected by violence.

Full state investment is critical to the ongoing stability of local violence intervention programs, which are put at risk by overreliance on one-time ARP funding. Nationally, state investments in Community Violence Intervention (CVI) have increased from just five states spending \$60 million in 2017 to 15 states investing nearly \$700 million in 2021; California's Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP) announced a record \$156 million in funding for violence intervention grants in 2022, and three states (Connecticut, Illinois, and Wyoming) have set funding levels at over 0.1% of their total budget. In Maryland, where the annual direct economic cost of gun violence is an estimated \$1.2 billion, it is imperative to follow the national trend of increased state commitment to community violence prevention.