



*STRENGTHENING SOCIETY*

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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:

The University of Maryland, Baltimore 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.

In the past 365 days, the Upton community has experienced 145 violent crimes. That means that families living in Upton are threatened with violent crimes every other day of the week. Just three weeks ago there were five people who were shot and/or killed in one day. We desperately need violence prevention and intervention.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore has developed a Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (CVIPP) which places credible messengers (previously incarcerated or those with lived experience of violent crime) on the streets every day to message around violence prevention, mediate conflicts, and provide case management. The CVIPP team is made up of social workers and credible messengers. Through this partnership we are able to decrease violent

crime and increase employment, enrollment in drug treatment, and access to mental health services.

The University received funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development this past January to implement the CVIPP model. Due to this funding, in the past three weeks we have been able to share violence prevention messages 1097 times and mediated 150 conflicts. Highly respected credible messengers who used to lead gangs in Baltimore have mediated high risk conflicts five times since the program began three weeks ago. Those mediations saved lives. Prior to the CVIPP, Upton was experiencing approximately 2.8 violent crimes per week. Since this program began, there has been an average of 1.7 violent crimes per week. There have been no murders in the Upton Community since the CVIPP program started.

We are already seeing great success, but we know this is not an issue that will be resolved quickly. Violence crime has been an issue for decades in this community and it will take years for us to stop the violence. If this bill is passed, funding will allow this type of work to continue. To be most effective in violence prevention we need multi-year funding which will allow for deeper relationships with those who are at risk of engaging in violent crime, increased number of violence interventionists on the street, and increased number of case managers to address the needs of the community. In the end, this funding will save lives.

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

Sincerely,



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Kyla Liggett-Creel, PhD, LCSW-C  
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