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Finance Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Senator Hayes in Support of Senate Bill 331: WNADA, Baltimore City - West North Avenue Development Authority - Membership and Procurement

February 21, 2023

Chair Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

The West North Avenue area of Baltimore City is in between two institutions of higher education, Coppin State University and the Maryland Institute College of Art, and in 2021 was understood to have great potential for economic development. SB783 passed that year, creating the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) for the purpose of revitalizing the neighborhood and investing in economic development.

In 2022, the WNADA appointed an Executive Director and has worked with more than 20 community and neighborhood organizations to develop a comprehensive plan for West North Avenue to be presented to the assembly on October 1st of this year. They have worked with partners around Baltimore to identify five priority zones for economic development in the area. They have secured \$300,000 in funding for projects with more grant funding pending.

Senate Bill 331 seeks to add the Maryland Secretary of Commerce and the Executive Director of Maryland Economic Development Corporation to the WNADA to ensure smooth acquisition and use of resources. The bill also exempts the WNADA from division 2 of the Maryland Procurement Law to allow the Authority to act with less bureaucratic burden in contracting for professional services and excel the development with parity to that which has occurred in East Baltimore.

As such, I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 331.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Antonio L. Hayes".

Senator Antonio L. Hayes
40th Legislative District – MD