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**HB 864**

March 7, 2023

**TO:** Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
**RE:** House Bill 864 – Civilian Review Board and Office of Equity and Civil Rights  
**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **SUPPORTS** House Bill (HB) 864.

HB864 provides for the responsible and gradual abrogation of the Civilian Review Board (CRB) while preserving and enhancing its existing investigatory and subpoena powers within the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR), the agency responsible for supporting and staffing the CRB, the Police Accountability Board (PAB), and the Administrative Charging Committee (ACC).

The CRB was created by state law in 1999 as the only civilian body with oversight of the law enforcement agencies of Baltimore City. Although the CRB is currently the only entity with independent investigatory authority, the enabling legislation limits its jurisdiction to five allegation types and requires complaints to be filed on a signed form within one year of the incident. HB864 maintains this investigative model of oversight, while removing administrative constraints and expanding jurisdiction to all complaints involving a member of the public.

OECR personnel currently handles the intake of the misconduct complaints, conducts independent investigations, and supports the CRB, PAB, and ACC. As such, HB864 provides for a transitional structure that ensures no loss of current staff or institutional knowledge and accounts for the resource and bandwidth concerns of supporting three entities with overlapping functions. While HB864 ensures the preservation of independent investigatory authority, it also transfers the decision-making power from the State to the Baltimore City Council. This is important because the bill reallocates the CRB's responsibilities, conscientiously protecting core principles of police accountability, while simultaneously embracing the tenets of local control.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on HB864. This bill represents the next step in accountability and transparency in policing for Baltimore City.