



Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

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MCAAHC

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March 5, 2024

Greetings Chair Barnes and members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The following is intended to express the full and enthusiastic support for HB 1066 on behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. This legislation will expand the reach and amplify the impact of the African American Heritage Preservation Program grant fund to include non-capital grant funding for African American heritage projects and organizations throughout the great state of Maryland.

The contributions of Maryland's African American citizens to our state's history has been traditionally diluted or completely omitted. This legislation will equip the Commission with more effective tools to ensure that an accurate and inclusive historical narrative is maintained and presented.

The Commission has championed the efforts and endeavors of African American cultural sites throughout Maryland. The funding to support programming, capacity building and operations is critical to our collecting, correcting, preserving, protecting, defending, disseminating and illuminating the African American experience in Maryland. Our efforts benefit all Marylanders and are central to the acceleration of public engagement through the state's heritage tourism activities.

Maryland's Black heritage sites are the crown jewels of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, our nation's oldest statewide Black preservation organization. Accordingly, we are steadfast in our commitment to increasing the level of support for additional projects, which will serve as cultural anchors and create and maintain healthy and culturally diverse communities. HB 1066 is in alignment with the vision and important work of the Commission. It is our sincere hope that you will cast your vote in favor of supporting this legislation. Maryland's African American History is Maryland History and American History. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration in this matter.

Yours in service,

Dr. Edwin T. Johnson, Chair

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