

March 7, 2024

Dear Honorable Members of the Maryland State Senate,

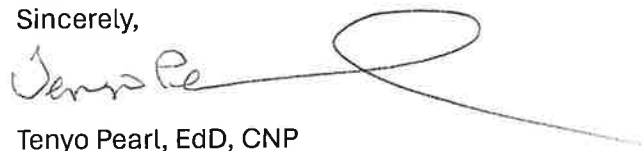
I am writing to ask your favorable vote on SB 646 as the founder of the Baltimore Hip Hop Historical Project and the originator of Hip Hop Day of Service, initiated on November 18, 2023, launched in Baltimore, Maryland. As a dedicated higher education professional, educator, mother, daughter, and community advocate, my life has been profoundly shaped by the transformative impact of hip-hop culture. In my youth, the resonant lyrics of Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five's "The Message" on WEBB Radio 1360 AM, owned by Dorothy Brunson, the first Black Female to own a radio station, sparked a sense of change. Over nearly 50 years, hip-hop has evolved into a cultural force and a call to action.

During the early 1980s, Marylander's Youth had the opportunity to join the airwaves of WEBB engaging in internships, volunteering and working alongside local DJs, empowered by the genre of hip-hop. As many members of Generation X recall those days, we can remember the days of which unity is fostered among Baltimore's youth which held a great significance in our city. Hip-Hop Day of Service, aligning with the third Saturday in November, aims to empower the next generation of leaders during youth homelessness awareness month. This day embodies hip-hop's true tenets, extending beyond music to celebrate community, expression, and activism. Past collaborations, such as BHHHP's 2023 initiative with the Franciscan Center, highlighted the positive impact of harnessing hip-hop for community service. Reflecting on my own journey, my initial volunteer work at the Franciscan Center during eighth grade shaped my passion and purpose. This path led to a 20+ year career in higher education, preparing the next generation of nonprofit leaders.

As you consider favorable supporting SB 646, it is important to recognize that hip-hop often receives a negative connotation. However, Hip-Hop Day of Service aims to celebrate its true tenets – a call to action, community service, empowerment, and a push for social justice. Establishing an official commemorative day for Marylanders dedicated to the legacy of hip-hop offers numerous benefits, introducing community service values to the youth, commemorating hip-hop's cultural significance, and serving as a call to action for future leaders.

Thank you in advance for your consideration to favorably support SB 646, acknowledging the potential for positive change that a designated Hip-Hop Day of Service can bring. Let us inspire the next generation to embrace the transformative power of hip-hop and be catalysts for meaningful change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tenyo Pearl", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Tenyo Pearl, EdD, CNP