



Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture

84 Franklin Street, Annapolis, MD 21401 410-216-6180

www.africanamerican.maryland.gov

MCAAHC

Edwin T. Johnson, PhD
Chair

Maya Davis
Vice Chair

Chanel Johnson
Executive Director

Commissioners

Kali Ahset-Amen, PhD

Dion Banks

Lori Bradford

H. Russell Frisby, Jr.

Wali Gill, PhD

Janice Curtis Greene

Kara Hunt, PhD

Philip J. Merrill

Jaelon Moaney

Brian Morrison, PhD

Barbara Paca, PhD, OBE

Robert Patterson, PhD

Ada Pinkston

Elinor L. Thompson

Hakeem Tijani, PhD

Reginald Turner

Kennedi Wilson

Wesley Wood

January 19, 2024

Health & Government Operations Committee
House Office Building
6 Bladen St.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Pena-Melnyk and Members of the Health & Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, I write in support of House Bill 133 to create a Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland. This Commission is vital in commemorating and expanding the public's understanding of the Civil War and the shaping of American democracy.

As a union state but also a slave-holding state, Maryland was a major epicenter for the abolitionist movement, which laid the groundwork for emancipation, women's rights, and civil liberties in the US. African American Civil War veterans, many born into enslavement, fought to end chattel slavery in our state and country to ensure freedom for themselves and their families. As such, understanding the role and experiences of African American Civil War veterans helps us better understand and appreciate our state and national history.

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is committed to discovering, documenting, preserving, collecting, and promoting Maryland's African American heritage. Therefore, we support the development of the Commission to Study African American Civil War Soldiers in Maryland. We would be honored to designate an MCAAHC commissioner to serve on this Commission to make certain recommendations regarding the funding, design, construction, and location of an appropriate memorial dedicated to African American Civil War soldiers and require the Commission to report its findings and

recommendation to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and please let me know if you need any additional information from our office on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chanel J.", written in a cursive style.

Chanel Compton Johnson

Executive Director