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MAYOR

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HB1283

March 7, 2024

TO: Members of the House Economic Matters Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 1283 – Insurance - Discrimination - Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1283.

HB 1283 prohibits discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity by insurers and health networks when engaging in certain insurance-related business practices including refusing or denying individual coverage, canceling, or refusing to underwrite insurance risk and other business practices because of the individual's race, sex, creed, color, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, or disability.

As anti-LGBTQ+ bills sweep much of our country, it is imperative that Maryland further strengthens its status as a state that does not discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity.ⁱ According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 250,000 Marylanders identify as LGBT.ⁱⁱ The LGBTQ+ community faces both unique and common medical challenges. Due to a variety of factors (including chronic stress and discrimination), lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals are more likely to experience poor health and have higher rates of disabilities and chronic conditions than heterosexual individuals.ⁱⁱⁱ Additionally, LGB persons also tend to have higher rates of unmet medical need because of cost and are less likely to have a regular health care provider.ⁱⁱⁱ We must take steps to protect the rights of this population and ensure that all Marylanders have equal access to medical care regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 1283.

ⁱ American Civil Liberties Union. (2024). Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2024>

ⁱⁱ Flores, A. and Conron, K. (2023). Adults LGBT Population in the United States. Retrieved from <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Adult-US-Pop-Dec-2023.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kates, J., Ranji, U., Beamesderfer, A., Salganicoff, A., & Dawson, L. (2018). Health and Access to Care and Coverage for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Individuals in the U.S. Retrieved from <https://www.kff.org/report-section/health-and-access-to-care-and-coverage-lgbt-individuals-in-the-us-health-challenges/>