



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
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Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 0724

February 18, 2025

TO: Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 0631/House Bill 0724 – Commission on Abandoned and Neglected Maryland Cemeteries – Establishment

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Peña-Melnick, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 0724.

This bill will create a Commission within the Office of Cemetery Oversight that will, among other things, create standard definitions for neglected and abandoned cemeteries, support the creation of an inventory of cemeteries and burial sites in the state, make policy recommendations for historical cemeteries with a concentration on African American cemeteries, create cemetery management materials and provide advice on the repair and maintenance of abandoned and neglected cemeteries. The Commission will communicate with municipalities to identify abandoned or neglected cemeteries in their jurisdictions, and consult with local jurisdictions about enabling legislation to provide protections for cemeteries.

There are numerous cemeteries in Maryland are abandoned or neglected. In Baltimore City, there are at least a dozen cemeteries that meet this definition, including cemeteries on land owned by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore. Baltimore City does not currently have enabling legislation protecting cemeteries. The creation of this Commission will help support Baltimore City and its citizens identify, steward, and protect neglected and abandoned cemeteries.

For the above stated reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **position** report on HB 0724.