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MAYOR

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HB 180

March 5, 2025

TO: Members of the Judiciary Committee

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

RE: House Bill 180 – Public Safety - Gun Violence Victim Relocation Program - Establishment

POSITION: Support with Amendment

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports with amendment** House Bill (HB) 180.

HB 180 would establish a nonlapsing \$10 million fund for relocating victims of gun violence, and a Gun Violence Victim Relocation Program within the Victim Services Unit of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy to administer relocation services. This sustainable source of assistance to gun violence victims across the state is crucial toward minimizing gun violence and ensuring the safety and well-being of victims and victims' families.

There is an urgent need for relocation of victims in the immediate aftermath of gun violence; survivors may otherwise be dead or revictimized by the time an arrest is made. Moreover, safely relocating gun violence victims – direct victims as well as their family members and other intended targets – will allow individuals to cooperate with law enforcement without fear of retaliation.

This bill will save lives. It is expected that approximately 800 direct gun violence victims will be eligible statewide each year for relocation assistance, with a large proportion coming from Baltimore City. To most effectively achieve the intent of the bill, the BCA recommends amendments specifying in greater detail the criteria for program eligibility and protocols for program administration. We also support the consideration of an amendment to direct the state funds to local jurisdictions for administration of relocation services on behalf of gun violence victims. In Baltimore City, the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (MONSE) is well positioned to utilize and expand on its existing victim services lane to take full advantage of state funding for victim protection and relocation.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable with amendment** report on HB 180.