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The Honorable Members of the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Maryland General Assembly, Annapolis, MD, 21401

Testimony in Support of HB0524 – African Heritage Month

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Maureen Wambui, and I am honored to offer my testimony in support of **HB0524 – African Heritage Month**.

As a first-generation Kenyan American and a financial professional who has spent nearly a decade working closely with immigrant and minority communities, I have witnessed firsthand the resilience, innovation, and economic contributions that African and African diaspora communities bring to Maryland. Much of my work centers on helping immigrants and underserved families navigate the U.S. financial system, build credit, start businesses, and create long-term financial stability for their families.

Across Maryland, African immigrants and families are deeply invested in the sustainability and success of their communities. Many are small business owners, healthcare professionals, entrepreneurs, and community leaders who contribute significantly to local economies. They open businesses, create jobs, purchase homes, and reinvest their earnings into neighborhoods, schools, and faith-based institutions. Their commitment to education, entrepreneurship, and community development strengthens Maryland's economic and cultural landscape.

Designating an **African Heritage Month** would recognize not only the rich cultural traditions of African communities but also their growing role in the economic vitality of our state. It would provide an opportunity for education, cultural exchange, and greater understanding, while honoring the values of hard work, resilience, and community responsibility that so many African families embody.

For many immigrants, recognition such as this sends a powerful message, that their history, culture, and contributions matter. It helps build bridges between communities and fosters a deeper appreciation of the diversity that makes Maryland strong.

I respectfully urge the committee to support HB0524 and affirm the important role African heritage and communities play in shaping Maryland's present and future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Maureen Wambui

Baltimore County