



BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

HB 1658

March 12, 2020

TO: Members of the Appropriations Committee
FROM: Matthew Stegman, Deputy Director of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 1658 – Economic Development - Baltimore Symphony Orchestra - Funding and Reporting

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Jackson, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 1658.

HB 1658 requires the Governor to appropriate additional funding for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO) annually between FY 2022 and FY 2025. It further requires the BSO to report each year on the efficacy of the additional funding and the general financial condition of the BSO.

The BSO is an important cultural institution that brings visitors from around the region to the heart of Baltimore City. In 2020, the BSO aims to bring over 325,000 visitors in from the City and surrounding region. Additionally, the BSO supports music education programs that serve children in Baltimore City Public Schools including the OrchKids program.

The BCA values its partnership with the BSO. In the FY 2020 budget, the City committed \$500,000 to support this internationally-recognized cultural and education institution. The BSO sustainability workgroup, under the leadership of former Senator Ed Kasemeyer, has made tremendous strides to put the orchestra back on sustainable financial footing. This bill would further support those efforts.

We respectfully request a **favorable** report on House Bill 1658.

*Annapolis – phone: 410.269.0207 • fax: 410.269.6785
Baltimore – phone: 410.396.3497 • fax: 410.396.5136
<https://mogr.baltimorecity.gov/>*