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HB 442

February 6, 2020

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Nicholas Blendy, Deputy Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 442 – Baltimore City - Elections - Early Voting Centers

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

Chair Kaiser, Vice Chair Washington, and Members of the Committee, the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) respectfully submits this **letter of information** on House Bill (HB) 442.

HB 442 is emergency legislation that, if enacted, would require that Baltimore City have eight early voting centers (instead of the current number of seven), beginning with the 2020 election cycle. Furthermore, the bill requires that one of the early voting centers in Baltimore City be located at Frederick Douglass High School.

The BCA acknowledges that HB 442 would impose additional, recurring fiscal costs to the Baltimore City general fund by adding an additional early voting site, which would necessarily mean additional operational and personnel costs. However, the BCA understands the intent of the legislation is to provide additional opportunities for the voters in Baltimore City—and in particular those who would find an early voting location around the Frederick Douglass High School/Mondawmin area of West Baltimore—to vote early. The BCA supports efforts to increase voter turnout and access to the elective franchise; in a world where barriers to voting are being implemented elsewhere, making voting more convenient and easier in Baltimore City is a worthy endeavor.

In closing, the BCA acknowledges that the Baltimore City Board of Elections and Baltimore City Public Schools are the subject matter experts on how this bill would be implemented, if enacted. We urge the Committee to take their input into consideration.

We thank you for your attention to our **letter of information** on House Bill 442.

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