

**To: The Honorable Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chairperson
Education, Health and Environmental Matter Committee**

From: Dr. Carl S. Barham, Co- Leader Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team

Re: Support for Senate Bill 25 Commemorative Days Maryland Voting Equity Reform Day

Date: Thursday, March 11, 2021

I am speaking on behalf of the Historical Freedom Shrine Advocacy Team located in Dorchester County.

Permit me to highlight and to share with you six reasons why we strongly support Senate Bill 25.

- It confirms that the Right to Vote is a core value guaranteed to us by the Constitution. Voting is the one opportunity that make us equal as citizens. It is our great equalizer in a democratic society. Exercising this right will improve the quality of life for many citizens.
- It can serve as a reminder and motivator during election time for us to reconnect and dedicate ourselves in exercising the power of our vote.
- It provides a model how ten brave men, eight white and two African American worked together to improve through the political process ,how to make our county and state a better place to live.
- It represents a rich legacy that we can pass on to our children on how we fought for fairness and equal access for voting rights.
- It memorializes the work of ten men by having erected in their honor in 1987, a 20,000 pound blue granite monument in Dorchester County.

- It confirms that amending the Maryland Constitution in 1986 by changing from a system of At Large Voting to District Voting, continue to increase racial minorities leadership and participation at the local , state and the federal level in the work force.

Finally, you are encouraged to visit Dorchester County to see and learn about this historical memorial. The monument is officially called **Freedom From Political Persecution and Tyranny**. However, it is more popularly known as the **Historical Freedom Shrine**.