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MAYOR

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HB0591

February 13, 2024

TO: Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

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

RE: House Bill 591 – Real Property - Transfer to Heir or Legatee - Exemption From Payment

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 591.

HB 591 allows families to transfer a property from a deceased homeowner to their heir without paying outstanding taxes prior to the transfer. This would clear an important barrier faced by moderate-to-low-income families who are trying to transfer the family home from one generation to another.

Stabilizing families, homes, and neighborhoods is a critical goal for the Baltimore City Health Department. The family home is often the only major asset a working-class Baltimore City family owns. When the homeowner, usually an older adult, dies, the family may face legal and financial impediments to retitling the home – in particular, the requirement that a new deed can only be recorded until outstanding property taxes are paid. This requirement may delay the transfer of the property to a family member, or even render it impossible.

HB 591 clears barriers that might otherwise keep people from inheriting a family home. As a result, the home stays in the family, reducing the risk of homelessness and family destabilization. This is especially important for multigenerational households, which frequently include older adults who need family support.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 591.