



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

Kevin Davis
Police Commissioner

September 12, 2016

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Attention: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary

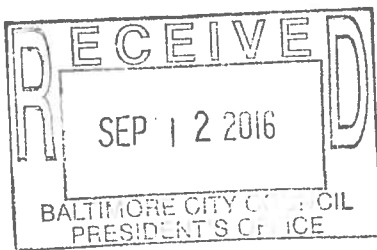
**Re: City Council Bill No. 16-0652
Baltimore City Municipal Identification Cards**

Dear Council President Young and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD or the Department) has reviewed Council Bill 16-0652. This bill requires the City to issue municipal identification cards for all qualifying residents that request them. BPD understands the goal of this legislation is to provide an avenue for residents of Baltimore without a government-issued ID to gain access to services and programming not accessible without proper identification. The Department understands that this program will provide government-issued identification to thousands of Baltimore residents currently lacking it, including immigrants, homeless people, transgender people, senior citizens, young people, and formerly incarcerated people. The BPD is favorable on this legislation.

Providing acceptable identification to individuals can have numerous positive implications for public safety. Baltimore's diverse and extensive network of cultural, educational, and civic opportunities often require identification for access. Without access to these assets, individuals may be more likely to become involved in criminal activity. The resulting criminal record these individuals obtain makes it even more difficult to gain access to economic opportunities in the future, such as a job or housing. Lack of proper identification also makes it more likely that an individual will be arrested. For example, state law and city code permits BPD to issue citations instead of arrest for a number of low-level, non-violent offenses. However, an individual without acceptable identification is not eligible for citation, and therefore must be arrested. Assuming the municipal identification cards will fit the definition of "acceptable identification" under BPD's citation policy, this legislation will prevent people from being unnecessarily arrested.

Given the opportunities and alternatives municipal identification cards present, as well as the potential public safety benefits, BPD is pleased to support this legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. The Department looks forward to working with the City Council on this matter.



Sincerely,

Andrew G. Vetter
Chief of Staff