
CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT,
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW
JAMES L. SHEA, CITY SOLICITOR
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET
SUITE 101, CITY HALL
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

March 23, 2021

The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Attn: Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall 100 N. Holiday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: Council Bill 21-0033 – Imari’s LGBTQ Procurement Preference Act

The Department of Law Minority and Women’s Business Opportunity Office (MWBOO) hereby reports on Council Bill 21-0033 – Imari’s LGBTQ Procurement Preference Act.

We recognize this bill is for the purpose of creating a LGBTQ Business Enterprise program to be administered by the Minority and Women’s Business Opportunity Office (MWBOO). This bill would allow eligibility and revocation requirements for firms being deemed as LGBTQ for the purpose of procurement initiatives that award City contracts to participants in a program that is structured to provide businesses with fair opportunities in competitive bidding. The bill further describes the LGBTQ program would operate in the same capacity that the MBE/WBE and SBLE is structured in accordance with *Article 5 Subtitle 28*.

While MWBOO supports the opportunity and inclusion this bill would create, there is not a documented disparity study that proves the LGBTQ business population has been marginalized or disadvantaged from procurement opportunities in Baltimore City. A comprehensive disparity study is required for the City to document the statistical context that warrants the need for this program to be implemented. Additionally, a program of this magnitude would greatly enlarge the mission of MWBOO and will require an abundance of fiscal resources, HR support, program staffing, and operational deliverables. Moreover, at this time MWBOO does need to (first) improve its sustainability and performance capacity with the existing MBE/WBE program which is already written into law and the SBLE program which still has not been enacted due to limited fiscal and administrative resources.

Indeed, MWBOO greatly supports the equity this council bill promotes; however, we have a duty to ensure that, if housed in the MWBOO department, it will be effective, efficient, and administer quality service that the Law Department is known for displaying.

Sincerely,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "LaShella Miller".

LaShella Miller
Chief
Minority and Women's Business Opportunity Office

CC: Solicitor Jim Shea
Nina Themelis