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Stokes

Baltimore City Council Hearing, CCBill 22-0254
Office of Aging – Independent Agency
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Chairwoman Sharon Green Middleton and Honorable Members
of the Economic & Community Development Committee,

Thank you for this invitation and opportunity to testify in support of
City Council Bill 22-254 which seeks to restore Baltimore to
its national excellence as a city which honors and supports the
unique needs and continuum opportunities of our older citizens.

This continuum begins in our 50's, helping citizens plan for our
retirements and even explore contemporary volunteer, part-time
and second career opportunities. It proceeds through the
decades in serving as responsive and reliable points of inquiry as
age-ing issues arise.

From its establishment by ordinance in 1973 --- with leadership from
our former colleague, now retired Senator Barbara A. Mikulski ---
The Commission of Aging & Retirement Education, known as CARE,
was designated as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) as mandated by
the federal Older Americans Act.

In its 30 active years of
service + outreach

received

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In its 30 active years of service and outreach, Baltimore's CARE was recognized citywide and credited with much of the City's outspoken respect and praise for our spirited senior citizens. In 2011, however, after the most recent Director retired, CARE was merged with the Health Department (BCHD), divided into 5 separate services, and more recently granted the City's former status as Baltimore's Area Agency on Aging (AAA).

Thanks to our Health Department's diligence and our Mayor's courage, thousands of our lives have been spared, and the Commission on Aging has been likewise safely protected throughout the dominance of the Covid years. In the latter case, the Health Department has made it possible to begin renewing the City's praise and celebration of our elders and to focus on addressing the continuum of need and opportunity of the age-ing process itself.

APPROVAL
Approval of City Council Bill
22-254 -

Approval of City Council Bill 22-0254 is a modest but significant beginning to a collaborative process among City agencies, potential non-profit partners, and “ageing” representatives, the purpose being to define boundaries and engage collaborators, from which a plan will emerge and a Director selected. An “AGE-ING Seat” in the Mayor’s Cabinet would signal the esteem we’ve all been too isolated to express until focused on this FY2023 Initiative.

Dear Colleagues,

AGE-ING is not an illness.

It’s a continuum, a distinct discipline of expertise. *We need both!*

Thanks for your consideration of that distinction in determining the inclusion and empowerment of us Baltimore City elders.