



Appendix A

BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
Mayor
250 City Hall, 100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

May 18, 2020

The Honorable Brandon Scott, President
Baltimore City Council
Attn: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 19-0380 – Charter Amendment – Vetoes

Dear President Scott:

As I have written you on several occasions, I am in agreement with the membership of the City Council that the Baltimore City Charter ought to be reviewed from time to time and updated to meet our present challenges. However, I remain concerned with the process the Council has taken in advancing piecemeal amendments without significant public engagement. After careful consideration and for the reasons stated in this letter, I am vetoing City Council Bill 19-0380 in accordance with Article IV, Section 5 of the Baltimore City Charter.

City Council Bill 19-0380 would amend Section 5(b)(3) of Article IV of the City Charter to reduce the number of votes needed to override a mayoral veto from three-fourths of the members of the City Council to two-thirds of those members. I have serious concerns about the impact of such a change in concert with other charter amendments that have been proposed by members of the Council including amendments to change the composition and size of the body. At the same time, the Council has provided no evidence that the current threshold to override a Mayoral veto hinders city governance. In fact, the Finance Department testified on several occasions that the high threshold to overturn an executive action contributes to Baltimore's sound fiscal health.

I continue to believe that changes to our foundational governing documents should be considered holistically and with genuine public input. On two separate occasions I have written to you to express my concern about the fundamentally flawed

process the Council's Equity and Structure Committee has undertaken to review and advance charter amendments, a process that has afforded little opportunity for genuine citizen engagement. While the Council's other committees have largely confined their work to matters related to the COVID-19 response or that require time-sensitive action, the Equity and Structure Committee has held near-weekly work sessions at times of the day when the public is unlikely to be able to watch or participate. The deadline to certify charter changes for the November ballot is in late July and there is no public interest served by aggressively moving charter changes in the manner you have allowed to occur, to date.

In March, Councilman Stokes introduced City Council Bill 20-0206R, which calls for the creation of a citizens' commission to review the host of charter amendments currently before the Council. The commission would consist of a member of the public from each of the fourteen council districts, an at-large citizen member, experts from our city's respected law schools, and nonpolitical agency staff. You are, in fact, a cosponsor of this legislation yet it has not been heard. The deadline to certify charter changes for the November ballot is in late July, meaning there is still time to convene this commission should the council choose to do so.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed City Council Bill 19-0380.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard C. Young", written in a cursive style.

Bernard C. "Jack" Young
Mayor

CC: The Honorable Sharon Green Middleton
The Honorable Bill Henry
The Honorable Kristerfer Burnett
The Honorable Danielle McCray
Dana Moore, Acting City Solicitor
Lester Davis, Deputy Chief of Staff
Matthew Stegman, Mayor's Legislative Liaison
Elena DiPietro, Chief Solicitor
Hilary Ruley, Chief Solicitor
Victor Tervala, Chief Solicitor