

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BERNARD C "JACK" YOUNG, Mayor



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

100 Holliday Street, Rm 250
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

August 20, 2019

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

Re: City Council Bill 19-0410 – The Baltimore City Trauma-responsive Care Act

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice ("MOCJ") has reviewed City Council Bill 19-0410. This legislation establishes the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, requires certain individuals to undergo formal training in trauma-informed care and perform other duties to ensure that the best practices in trauma-informed care are being followed in the delivery of services by certain agencies, requires certain agencies to submit reports to the Task Force, requires the Task Force to submit an annual report to the Mayor and City Council regarding the re-orientation of certain city services to focus on trauma-informed care, reconstitutes the current Office of Children Youth and Families to be known as the Office of Children and Family Success and makes it a primary duty of that office to lead a citywide initiative to prioritize trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of services.

From the perspective of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), Council Bill #19-0410 represents an innovative, thoughtful approach to address the impact of trauma in our city, particularly as it relates to children and youth. Directly experiencing or witnessing chronic and sustained violence, including gun violence, is a potentially devastating form of trauma that imposes a lasting effect on young people and their families. MOCJ is charged with the development and implementation of a collaborative and city-wide strategy to reduce violence in our city, while also addressing the impact to those who are suffering the negative impact of violence already prevalent in a number of our communities. This bill has the potential to benefit this work immensely.

By way of background, community violence is not evenly distributed across neighborhoods in cities such as Baltimore. It is critical to note that residents who are exposed to violence and other traumatic experiences on a regular basis tend to be people of color. Underscoring the need for this particular legislation are the following statistics: a ranking of the top 10 leading causes of violence-related deaths in 2015 puts homicide involving a firearm first among 15- to 34-year-olds.¹ And a ranking of the 10 leading causes of violence-related injury deaths lists homicide involving a firearm as the number one cause of death for all ages combined for both blacks and Hispanics.²

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS database, "10 Leading Causes of Violence-Related Injury Deaths, United States, 2015, All Races, Both Sexes," accessed March 20, 2017 (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS database, "10 Leading Causes of Violence-Related Injury Deaths, United States, 2015, Black, Non-Hispanic, Both Sexes" and "10 Leading Causes of Violence Related Injury Deaths, United States, 2015, Hispanic, Both Sexes," accessed March 20, 2017 (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>)




For the purposes of comparison, overall for non-Hispanic whites, homicide with a firearm ranks fourth.³ Further, analysis of homicide victims in 2015 reveals that 83 percent of black homicide victims were killed with a firearm.⁴

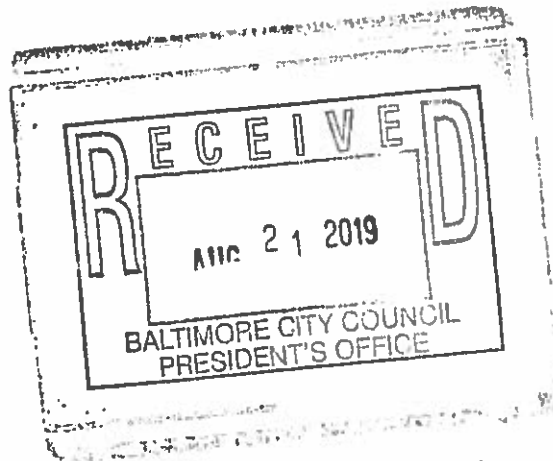
Given that the most recent available national estimates show that more than 70 percent of injuries involving gun violence are non-fatal,⁵ it is important to factor in the impact on individuals who witness or survive acts of violence.

There is a growing body of evidence that people living in communities where violence is prevalent are at increased risk for a broad range of negative outcomes. Unchecked, exposure to violence related trauma can lead to significant impacts on learning and development, mental health, behavior and even increased risk of chronic illness. Council Bill #19-0410 calls for a dynamic framework to get us ahead of this growing issue and to ensure there is the structure and resources needed to deal with trauma in our city.

For these reasons, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice recommends a **favorable report** on Council Bill #19-0410.

Sincerely,


Ganesha Martin
Director
Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice



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³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS database, "10 Leading Causes of Violence-Related Injury Deaths, United States, 2015, White, Non-Hispanic, Both Sexes," accessed March 20, 2017 (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS database, calculations by Violence Policy Center. In 2015 there were 9,038 black homicide victims, 7,515 of which were killed with a firearm. Accessed February 14, 2017 (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, WISQARS database, calculations by Violence Policy Center. In 2014 there were 33,599 fatal gun deaths and 81,304 non-fatal firearm injuries. Accessed May 31, 2016 (<http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>).