



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of SB 301: Corporations – Board Members and Executive Officers
Diversity – Procurement Preference and Reporting

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

I commend Senator Sydnor for introducing Senate Bill 301, which would require the Board of Public Works to create diversity thresholds for corporate board members and executive officers that reflect the demographics of the State.

I am also encouraged that SB 301 would require publicly held corporations with assets above \$100,000,000 to report to the Board on their diversity, equity, inclusion practices, as well as how these factors apply to the selection of board members and executive officers.

Howard County takes pride in the diversity of our residents and businesses. Ensuring that the diversity of our entrepreneurial and innovative private sector has been a long-standing priority of mine. As former Chair of the Howard County Council, I led the initiative for the Howard County Equal Business Opportunity Commission to study the effectiveness of the county's Equal Business Opportunity Program. This program was a county-led initiative that aims to include businesses led by minorities, women and people who are disabled in the county's procurement process for all goods and services.

As County Executive, I have prioritized opportunity and accessibility for all. In 2019, my Administration spent \$59.2 million with minority, woman, and veteran owned firms, which represented a nearly 20% increase than what was spent in 2018. We have worked to update our public procurement processes, making Howard County Government more innovative, effective and inclusive government.

I understand that promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in our private sector only makes it stronger. When government can work with business to provide opportunities for all, our State becomes even more competitive and able to seize future business opportunities. Senate Bill 301 will build on existing efforts to champion diversity and a strong private sector.

For these and many more reasons, I urge your support of SB 301.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive