



2023

BALTIMORE CITY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor



BUILDING PUBLIC SAFETY

Modify Home Monitoring Notification. This bill would decrease the time someone currently on a home monitoring system can go missing before that person's missing status is reported to an administrative judge. This unnecessary delay in reporting, currently up to 48 hours, has unfortunately led to a number of victims and perpetrators of crimes found while wearing an ankle monitor **Statewide Bill.**

Sunset the Civilian Review Board and Grant Concurrent Investigatory Powers for Administrative Charging Committees. With last year's establishment of the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and Administrative Charging Committee (ACC) in Baltimore City, our Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) finds itself staffing both newly established bodies, as well as the Civilian Review Board (CRB). My Administration requests legislation to repeal the enabling statute for the current CRB, so our efforts for holding police accountable are streamlined and consistent with jurisdictions around the state. Also, in order to fulfill commitments made during the 2022 Legislative session, I am requesting a provision to enable the OECR to conduct concurrent investigations into police misconduct complaints received, as directed by the ACC. **Local Bill.**

Allow Review of Social Media Accounts of Police Officer Candidates. This legislation would help ensure that police officer candidates do not harbor any feelings detrimental to their ability to perform their duties without bias or prejudice by allowing hiring committees access to candidates' social media accounts. Previously, my Administration worked closely with leaders in the Senate and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) to produce legislation inclusive of a range of opinions, and we look forward to passing it this year. This is a reintroduction of the amended bill from the 2022 Legislative Session. **Statewide Bill.**

Protect Traffic Enforcement Officers from Felony Assault. Recently, Traffic Enforcement Officers (TEOs) have experienced situations where members of the public have expressed frustration. And, unfortunately, there have been select cases where TEOs have been assaulted. This legislative request looks to increase the penalty for assaulting a TEO from a misdemeanor to a felony. **Statewide Bill.**

Impound Vehicles of Chronic Offenders. This bill would authorize Baltimore City to impound vehicles owned by individuals considered "chronic offenders" of automated speed and red-light cameras. Chronic offenders would be defined as vehicles that have accrued \$1,000 or more in unpaid Baltimore City automated enforcement violations. **Local Bill.**



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Clarify Total Allowable Towing Fees. This bill would clarify the towing-fee-related provisions in §21-10A-04¹ of the Transportation Article. That statute imposes constraints on the fees that can be charged for towing vehicles from private parking lots, a practice often called “trespass towing.” The statute generally sets the permissible fee for trespass towing as double the “total fees normally charged or authorized by the political subdivision for the public safety impound towing of vehicles, however, there have been conflicting interpretations of the meaning of this clause. A recent opinion issued by the Office of the Attorney General clarified that “the total fees” referred to do not include fees for storage or notice, or fines owed for traffic and parking violations, and likely do not include administrative fees charged by Baltimore City, or any political subdivision, for public safety impound towing. Instead, the trespass towing “fee limit,” is set only by doubling the fee “normally charged or authorized” by a jurisdiction for public safety impound towing. This clarification, introduced into code, will dramatically decrease the cost associated with trespass towing and storage fees in Baltimore City. **Local Bill.**

Grant Citation Authority to the Board of Liquor License Commissioners. The Alcoholic Beverages Article outlines how the consumption of alcoholic beverages at an unlicensed establishment is handled. Currently, the Baltimore City Police Department has the sole enforcement authority to close the operations of an establishment that is in violation of the health, safety, and welfare of the community by violating this provision of code. My Administration seeks to add concurrent authority to the Board of Liquor License Commissioners (BLLC) to impose Environmental Control Board citations, if authorized by the Mayor and City Council, freeing up City Officers to perform other duties required to uphold public safety. **Local Bill.**

Increase Board of Liquor License Commissioner Maximum Fines. Related to the Citation Authority Bill, currently, the BLLC is constrained in its enforcement actions, and the maximum fine the BLLC may impose for a violation committed by a bar, restaurant, or another establishment is low, in comparison to other boards throughout the State. The BLLC has found that imposing significant fines and lengthy suspensions are effective in correcting licensee behavior and compliance with our Rules, but the Board is unable to impose a fine of more than \$3,000. The Board seeks to alter this section to mirror the penalty authority for Montgomery County’s Liquor License Board by issuing fines up to \$20,000. Lastly, the Board currently does not have the ability to adopt rules to carry out the penalty enforcement; language specifically authorizing this will allow the Board to be more efficient. **Local Bill.**

¹ [https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gtr§ion=21-10A-04&enactments=false#:~:text=Statutes%20Text&text=%C2%A721%E2%80%9310A%E2%80%9304.&text=\(9\)%20May%20not%20tow%20a,is%20placed%20on%20the%20vehicle.](https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gtr§ion=21-10A-04&enactments=false#:~:text=Statutes%20Text&text=%C2%A721%E2%80%9310A%E2%80%9304.&text=(9)%20May%20not%20tow%20a,is%20placed%20on%20the%20vehicle.)



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SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Mandate Reporting Requirements for Haulers. This legislation would mandate that waste, recycling, and organic waste haulers in Maryland report the types, quantities, and destinations of materials that were disposed of, sold, or transferred to their county government on an annual basis, helping jurisdictions across the state to reach their recycling goals and alleviate local staff workloads. **Statewide Bill.**

TAX SALE REFORM

For the past year, the Baltimore City Tax Sale Workgroup has been holding meetings with stakeholders in government, the non-profit and private sectors, planning a robust legislative package to address the reforms needed to overhaul and update Baltimore City's tax sale processes at both the state and local level. While this is not work that will be accomplished overnight, I am proud to introduce three pieces of legislation and support two others to begin this much-needed conversation.

Expand Vacant Property In-Rem. This legislation would expand the current in-rem process to include additional properties with clearly defined outcomes to ensure fair compensation to property owners. These will include all vacant building notice properties, abandoned properties, and unoccupied properties that meet certain criteria. It also establishes a statute of limitations for challenges to any title claims. **Local Bill.**

Address Occupied Properties. This bill would remove the need for the current process, which sells debts through the sale of certificates. This would provide enabling language for my Administration to cancel the annual sale, provide authorization to create payment plans for all municipal collections, and determine the interest rate. It also provides tenant protection and determines the criteria for the process to end resulting in an in-rem sale. **Local Bill.**

Support Heir Properties. The removal of claims for heirs when properties are dismissed is in place in many states but not in Maryland, complicating future acquisitions. Allowing properties to transfer to heirs with outstanding liens helps preserve generational wealth and allows heirs access to programs benefiting owner occupied properties. This will help resolve many tangled title issues. **Statewide Bill.**

Property Tax Exemption Status (Sen. McCray). Certain properties are exempt from real property taxes, such as non-profits and religious institutions, but they must apply for the properties to be exempt and this exemption cannot be applied to prior years. Should the entity miss the application deadline, it is responsible for real estate taxes as if it were not tax-exempt. My Administration is proud to support Senator McCray's bill that would allow these exemptions to be applied to prior years under certain circumstances. **Local Bill.**



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Authorize Special Rates for Property Taxes (Del. Boyce). I am proud to support Delegate Boyce's Authority to Set Special Rates of Property Taxes bill. Baltimore City has the highest property rate in the state, and this can create some challenges for the residents and businesses in the City or those exploring a move to the City. By providing the City with a tool to more equitably spread the load of property taxes, we can overcome barriers to homeownership and entice new residents and businesses to come to the City. Moreover, as this is enabling legislation, this bill would allow my Administration to develop an equitable framework to target and balance any changes in property tax rates to ensure such changes are advantageous to the City and our residents, businesses, and other entities, and to safeguard against any detrimental impacts or inequities. **Local Bill.**



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PRIORITIZING QUALITY OF LIFE

Grant Medical Records Access to Local Maternal Mortality Teams. This legislation would amend the existing local Maternal Morality Review legislation to allow local teams access to medical records associated with each case of maternal death, thereby allowing Health Departments to more effectively use their local maternity mortality team. **Statewide Bill.**

Allow Emergency Civil Injunction Relief for Illegal Evictions. Evictions remain a pressing issue post-pandemic. My Administration will be seeking a change in the Courts and Judicial Proceedings article to allow for emergency civil injunctive relief in District Court which prohibits illegal eviction (and constructive eviction) of tenants. The proposal would also amend Baltimore City Public Local Law by removing criminal penalties for what is essentially a breach of contract action, and harmonize it with the state law. **Local Bill.**

Support Walter's Unionization (Del. Lewis). I am proud to support legislation that Delegate Robbyn Lewis has introduced to create a process for union recognition and collective bargaining for employees of the Walters Art Museum. This bill is based on similar processes that the legislature enacted for the Baltimore Police Department. This process would require both the management of the Walters and the employees' union to abide by the results of an election overseen by a neutral third party, and then bargain in good faith if a majority of employees vote for a union. This is a process that is fair to all involved. The state has created similar union recognition processes for other institutions in the recent past. **Local Bill.**