



## COUNCIL BILL 08-0163

### *Live Entertainment and Dancing – Zoning – Conditional Uses*

**April 30, 2009**

**POSITION: Support**

Messrs. Chairmen and Members of the *Judiciary and Legislative Investigations* and *Land Use and Transportation* Committees:

On behalf of the members of the *Restaurant Association of Maryland*, we support Council Bill 08-0163, which would enhance nightlife in Baltimore City through a targeted expansion of live entertainment with appropriate neighborhood safeguards.

We applaud Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake for her unprecedented approach in crafting a final piece of legislation that successfully addresses the concerns expressed by stakeholders throughout the process. Never before have we seen such an open dialogue on such a controversial issue before this Council. We hope that the Council President's leadership will be replicated for other controversial matters involving neighborhoods and the business community.

When this legislation was first introduced, many of our members who currently provide live entertainment expressed concerns about additional burdens that this legislation would place on their businesses, especially during this tough economic climate. While our members in zoning districts that currently prohibit live entertainment welcomed a potential new marketing opportunity, they worried about associated license fees and other hurdles. The amended version of this legislation addresses those concerns and balances them with the concerns of the residential community. This legislation will also help with efforts to attract more tourism.

Since the adoption of the statewide smoking ban, many of our Baltimore City businesses that relied on smoking customers have been searching for creative ways to lure new customers. We believe that this legislation will also help those business owners who wish to transition into live entertainment venues in a responsible manner.

For these reasons, we support Council Bill 08-0163 and urge its passage.

Respectfully submitted,

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