

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 08-0013R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Henry, Curran, Clarke
Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2008
Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments
Adopted: March 17, 2008

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

**Request for Support of State Legislation -
Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act**

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3 FOR the purpose of urging the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the ~~2008~~
4 Maryland General Assembly and the Governor of Maryland to end discrimination against
5 same-sex couples and their families by passing ~~Senate Bill 290 and House Bill 351~~, the
6 *Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act*, which would amend state law to
7 remove references to sex and gender as eligibility requirements for a civil marriage license
8 and enact a law providing for equal access to marriage and all of its legal benefits and
9 obligations by all persons, regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

10 **WHEREAS**, Maryland is home to thousands of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals,
11 including many same-sex couples, many raising children; and

12 **WHEREAS**, These families deserve the same rights and legal protections as other families
13 under the law, including the protection of their children's economic interests by insuring their
14 access to the resources of both parents; and

15 **WHEREAS**, Marriage is a unique civil institution, administered by the state, and separate and
16 distinct from any religious, ethnic, or other tradition; and

17 **WHEREAS**, Marriage bestows thousands of state and federal rights, protections, and
18 responsibilities that are otherwise unavailable to gay and lesbian families; and

19 **WHEREAS**, The inability to access these legal protections results in significant harm to these
20 families, including financial insecurity, lack of insurance and other benefits, and access to the
21 court system should dissolution occur; and

22 **WHEREAS**, Discriminatory marriage laws result in significant harm to individuals and
23 couples by perpetuating homophobia, just as anti-miscegenation laws barring people of different
24 races from marrying perpetuated racism and social ostracism; and

25 **WHEREAS**, Discriminatory marriage laws and court decisions undermine Maryland's
26 commitment to equality, privacy, and justice for all of its citizens; and

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken by amendment.

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1 **Whereas**, The opportunity to publicly and legally commit to share one’s life with a person of
2 one’s choice is for many people one of the most central aspects of human experience, and denial
3 of marriage to same-sex couples is the denial of a fundamental civil right.

4 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the City
5 Council of Baltimore urges the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the ~~2008~~
6 Maryland General Assembly and the Governor of Maryland to end discrimination against same-
7 sex couples and their families by passing ~~Senate Bill 290 and House Bill 351~~, the *Religious*
8 *Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act*, which would amend state law to remove references
9 to sex and gender as eligibility requirements for a civil marriage license and enact a law
10 providing for equal access to marriage and all of its legal benefits and obligations by all persons,
11 regardless of sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

12 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor of
13 Maryland, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate
14 Delegations to the ~~2008~~ Maryland General Assembly, the Mayor, and the Mayor’s Legislative
15 Liaison to the City Council.