

CITY OF BALTIMORE
RESOLUTION _____
Council Bill 06-0562

Introduced by: Councilmembers Curran, Spector, Kraft, Holton, Reisinger, Clarke, Welch,
Rawlings Blake, D’Adamo, Young, Conaway, Harris, Mitchell, President Dixon,
Councilmember Branch

Introduced and read first time: December 7, 2006

Read second time: December 7, 2006

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL CONCERNING

A Baltimore City Tribute to Maryland
Attorney General J. Joseph Curran, Jr. – “The Conscience of Maryland”

FOR the purpose of paying tribute to a storied public servant who has graced the State of Maryland with nearly a half century of dedicated public service on behalf of those least able to help themselves, fighting tirelessly to empower those of unequal power, striving valiantly to protect the vulnerable young and the fragile aged, working courageously to achieve equality for those treated as less equal, battling to secure protection for consumers from exploitation by big business, and holding to account profiteers whose negligence harmed those dependent upon them for sustenance; and providing for a special effective date.

Recitals

The Honorable J. Joseph Curran, Jr. will retire after 5 terms as the longest-serving elected attorney general in the history of Maryland, having also served terms in the Maryland House of Delegates, the Maryland Senate, and as Lieutenant Governor where he earned the admiration of many and the rancor of some, as a champion of liberal causes.

With apologies to none, Curran has never shied from taking the unpopular stance against what he personally saw as detrimental to the dignity of the individual or society, speaking out for racial and gender equality, against the Vietnam War, and in opposition to capital punishment as “unworthy” of our system of criminal justice.

J. Joseph Curran Jr.’s career-long crusade against gun violence was tragically underscored when the anguish of victims’ families was mirrored by that of his own after his father, Council Vice President J. Joseph Curran, Sr., died in the aftermath of the 1976 shootings at temporary City Hall, and he continued to seek legislative changes that would give law enforcement more tools to keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people.

In his unending battle to make Maryland a better place for all who have lacked a voice and needed a champion, Curran has made possible many important legal reforms that put the State at the forefront of national efforts to modernize many aspects of the legal system, lending his authority to bills that created Maryland’s Court of Special Appeals and the District Court system and that reformed laws regard alimony and divorce, adoption and guardianship, and medical malpractice.

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

Council Bill 06-0562

1 The premier consumer advocate, his decades-long crusade resulted in over \$100 million in
2 recoveries from those who engaged in deceptive and predatory practices of all kinds – he
3 stopped companies from charging low-income Marylanders 700% interest on unconscionable
4 loans, shut down businesses that peddled phony treatments to cancer patients, and cleaned up
5 deceptive sales and repair schemes in the automobile industry.

6 Taking his advocacy skills to the Supreme Court, the Attorney General won cases that
7 expanded the authority of law enforcement to order passengers out of a lawfully- stopped vehicle
8 when necessary to protect the officer and that upheld the State’s law allowing child abuse
9 victims to testify via one-way television so as not to have to face their abusers.

10 Curran has also been a leader in antitrust enforcement, recovering more than \$5 million in
11 multiple suits against Bristol-Myers Squibb and other pharmaceutical companies for keeping
12 lower cost, generic competitors out of the market; millions more for consumers, charities, and
13 the State’s general fund for retail price-fixing against many manufacturers of electronics and
14 other products; and won a multi-states’ suit against insurance companies conspiring to keep
15 liability insurance from local government and against contact lens manufacturers for conspiring
16 to keep supply limited and prices high.

17 From his early support of divorce reform, civil protective orders, and other laws helping
18 abused women, to his creation and stewardship of the Family Violence Council, Curran has been
19 an outspoken and consistent advocate for better laws, innovative programs, and comprehensive
20 training to help victims of domestic violence. He has also advanced legislative and educational
21 outreach efforts to improve the protection of children and adults from sexual violence.

22 In the area of juvenile crime, the forward thinking Attorney General promoted over many
23 years a variety of juvenile crime prevention programs, and soliciting the advice and cooperation
24 of youth, he made a report, *In Their Own Words*, about how adults can improve their response to
25 teens’ problems. He also distributed 600,000 media violence diaries through the schools to help
26 parents monitor their children’s consumption of media violence. His focus on the problems
27 faced by elderly Marylanders has been no less strident, as he worked especially to help them
28 cope with health-related and end-of-life issues, as well as their vulnerability to abuse.

29 A protector of the environment, as well as the people, Curran has long championed the clean-
30 up of the Chesapeake Bay and promoted cleaner air and water for Marylanders through vigorous
31 enforcement of state and federal laws, putting environmental polluters in jail for the first time in
32 Maryland history and recouping millions of dollars in damage coverage for oil spills and billions
33 worth of improvements to the sewer systems of various municipalities.

34 The Honorable J. Joseph Curran, Jr. has led a professional life of selfless service to the
35 people, the land, and the waters of the State of Maryland, and in return we wish for him, as in the
36 words of the well known Irish toast:

37 *May the wind be always at your back.*
38 *May the sun shine warm upon your face.*
39 *And rains fall soft upon your fields.*
40 *And until we meet again,*
41 *May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.*

Council Bill 06-0562

1 **SECTION 1. BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
2 this Body offers tribute to a storied public servant who has graced the State of Maryland with
3 nearly a half century of dedicated public service on behalf of those least able to help themselves,
4 who has fought tirelessly to empower those of unequal power, striven valiantly to protect the
5 vulnerable young and the fragile aged, worked courageously to achieve equality for those treated
6 as less equal, battled to secure protection for consumers from exploitation by big business, and
7 held to account profiteers whose negligence harmed those dependent upon them for sustenance.

8 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the
9 Honorable J. Joseph Curran, Jr. and Family.

10 **SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That this Resolution takes effect on the date it
11 is enacted.

Certified as duly passed this _____ day of _____, 20__

President, Baltimore City Council

Certified as duly delivered to His Honor, the Mayor,

this _____ day of _____, 20__

Chief Clerk

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20__

Mayor, Baltimore City