

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 05-0111R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Young, D’Adamo, Harris, Kraft, Branch, Holton, Mitchell,
Welch, Rawlings Blake, Conaway, Reisinger, Clarke
Introduced and read first time: December 5, 2005
Assigned to: Education, Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee
Committee Report: Favorable
Adopted: May 1, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Informational Hearing – Homelessness

FOR the purpose of requesting the President of the Baltimore Homeless Services Inc., as well as representatives of the Associated Catholic Charities, the Maryland Center for Veterans, St. Vincent de Paul Society of Baltimore Inc., the Health Education Resource Organization, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services Homeless Environment Unit, and Health Care for the Homeless, to brief the Council on the current homelessness situation in Baltimore City, provide information explaining the results of the 2005 census report relating to homelessness, and provide information about what is being done to achieve their goal of serving as a catalyst for the creation of affordable housing in Baltimore City.

Recitals

According to the 2005 Census done by the Baltimore City Health Department and the Baltimore Homeless Services Inc., there are currently between 3000 and 4000 homeless individuals in Baltimore City. As defined by HUD, a homeless individual is one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including shelters or a public or private place not designed for regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

The census goes on to state that the predominant causes of homelessness can be generalized to 4 factors: lack of affordable housing, lack of an adequate income, lack of adequate health insurance combined with poor health, and lack of adequate discharge planning from public institutions. Baltimore City provides services to the homeless population through a network of overnight emergency and transitional shelters; however, the shelter system is not a solution for homelessness. There is currently a dearth of permanent housing with on-site supports that have been proven to help individuals and families become more stable and independent.

In addition to providing the numbers regarding homelessness, the census also lays out a recommended strategy for the next census that includes implementing a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is used in emergency and transitional shelters in a way that allows shelter providers to input real-time data associated with the survey instrument.

The census also advises policy makers to consider changing how the system is structured, in order to keep the homeless population to a minimum. Some of these recommended changes include building or replacing housing units that are attainable for very low income individuals

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

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1 and families, investing in adequate discharge units for those leaving public institutions,
2 providing additional safety net health care services so that poor health and disability do not
3 contribute to homelessness, and raising the minimum wage to the level that allows individuals to
4 be self sufficient.

5 It is in the best interest of every community to end homelessness rather than to continue to
6 fund and manage a revolving door of human beings in crisis situations. Better coordination
7 between government agencies would be a major step in this direction. To end homelessness,
8 Baltimore City needs the dedicated commitment and support of the entire community. In order
9 to facilitate this process, and to learn more about what is happening and what can be done, an
10 informational hearing needs to be held to bring together the various community groups, City
11 government, and the various agencies involved with the homelessness issues in Baltimore City.
12 Hopefully, by helping each other and working together, the 2007 Census will show lowered
13 numbers in the homeless population.

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
15 Body requests the President of the Baltimore Homeless Services Inc., as well as representatives
16 of the Associated Catholic Charities, the Maryland Center for Veterans, St. Vincent de Paul
17 Society of Baltimore Inc., the Health Education Resource Organization, the Baltimore City
18 Department of Social Services Homeless Environment Unit, and Health Care for the Homeless,
19 to brief the Council on the current homelessness situation in Baltimore City, provide information
20 explaining the results of the 2005 census report relating to homelessness, and provide
21 information about what is being done to achieve their goal of serving as a catalyst for the
22 creation of affordable housing in Baltimore City.

23 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
24 President/CEO of Baltimore Homeless Services Inc., the Director of the Health Department, and
25 the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Council.