

Corrected Copy

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 14-0182R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Henry, Scott, Curran, Stokes, President Young,
Councilmembers Welch, Resinger, Branch, Holton, Spector, Mosby
Introduced and read first time: August 11, 2014
Assigned to: Labor Committee

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Racial Disparities in the BWI Thurgood Marshal Airport Concession Program**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting the efforts of Unite Here and the NAACP to address racial
4 disparities and the lack of opportunities for minorities working in the concessions at BWI
5 Thurgood Marshall Airport.

6 **Recitals**

7 Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, named for Baltimore native
8 and civil rights pioneer Thurgood Marshall, is a key part of our region's economy. As such, its
9 business decisions have an important impact on overall economic conditions, and the solution of
10 economic problems, here in Baltimore.

11 One of the most pressing economic problems facing our city is the concentrations of poverty
12 in our African-American communities. Over 30% of Baltimore's African-American residents
13 live in poverty, and the median income for Baltimore's African-American households is just 53%
14 that of its median white household.

15 If this intolerable situation is to be rectified, it is essential that Baltimore have the full
16 cooperation of all of her economic partners, especially keystones such as BWI, in combating
17 racial income inequality. Unfortunately, a recent report has made clear that in at least one
18 important area, it's concession program managed by AirMall USA, BWI is systematically falling
19 short in its efforts to be a good economic partner to the City.

20 This report, based on research and surveys conducted by Unite Here, found that although
21 African-American workers make up the majority of the concessions' labor force, they account for
22 less than one-third of the highest paid and most visible front of the house positions. Instead,
23 African-Americans are disproportionately concentrated in low-wage fast food and back of the
24 house positions whose median wage falls below the federal poverty line for a family of three.

25 In fact, an African-American concession worker has an 83% chance of filling one of these
26 low-wage positions, while a white worker has an 84% chance of working in a front of the house
27 position with a median wage annual wage 44% higher.

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

Council Bill 14-0182R

1 Since more than 4 out of every 5 of the hundreds of African-American BWI concession
2 workers live in Baltimore, this unequal treatment burdens our communities and perpetuates
3 rather than alleviates the problem of poverty in Baltimore.

4 Further, despite the fact that Baltimore is nearly two-thirds African-American, and despite the
5 existence of a federally mandated program to provide business opportunities for minority owned
6 businesses and other disadvantaged business enterprises at BWI, only 3 out of 40 AirMall
7 overseen concessionaires, a mere 7.5%, are African-American owned businesses. This
8 troublingly low rate of African-American owned business participation in the AirMall managed
9 concession program represents another missed opportunity to help alleviate Baltimore's income
10 inequality problem.

11 As Gerald Stansbury, President of the Maryland State Conference NAACP, says in his
12 introduction to the Unite Here report, the racial inequality found in the BWI concession program
13 is "an unacceptable outcome wherever it occurs. The fact that it is taking place at an airport
14 named after civil rights leader and NAACP Legal Defense Fund founder Thurgood Marshall
15 makes it the more egregious still. Thurgood Marshall spent his life fighting for civil rights and
16 equal opportunity: from risking his life defending falsely accused African-Americans in the Jim
17 Crow South, to arguing Brown vs. Board of Education, to defending civil rights as the Supreme
18 Court's first African-American justice, Marshall committed his life to battling inequality
19 wherever he saw it".

20 Baltimore cannot afford to have such an important partner failing to do its part in the struggle
21 against inequality. If AirMall USA cannot, or will not, act to alleviate the troubling racial
22 disparities in the concession program it manages at BWI, the State needs to step in and make
23 whatever changes are necessary to see that this affront to the legacy of Thurgood Marshall is
24 ended.

25 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
26 Council supports the efforts of Unite Here and the NAACP to address racial disparities and the
27 lack of opportunities for minorities working in the concessions at BWI Thurgood Marshall
28 Airport.

29 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the
30 Mayor, the Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the
31 Maryland General Assembly, the Executive Director of the Maryland Aviation Administration,
32 and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.