

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0165R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Dixon, Councilmembers D'Adamo, Young, Kraft, Curran, Reisinger,
Rawlings Blake, Welch, Holton, Harris, Conaway, Clarke, Branch
Introduced and adopted: April 4, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

**The Youth Commission Comprehensive Summit
on Juvenile Homicide in Baltimore City**

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3 FOR the purpose of calling upon the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Director of the
4 Department of Juvenile Services, the Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Baltimore Health
5 Commissioner, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, and the Chief of
6 School Police for the Baltimore City Public School System to brief the Commission and the
7 City Council on the current homicide rate among youth, the effect of limited length of life
8 expectation on the behavior of certain youth, and the response of the criminal justice system
9 to youthful offenders; to assess the ability of existing law enforcement, education, mental
10 health, and faith-based programs to address the educational, psychological, and spiritual
11 needs of youth who are involved in antisocial behavior; and to engage the Commission and
12 Baltimore's youth in the formulation of youth-driven policies that would better address the
13 needs of their generation and result in a de-escalation of the juvenile homicide rate in
14 Baltimore City.

Recitals

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16 The Center for Gun Policy and Research, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns
17 Hopkins University, reports that in 2001, there were 607 gun deaths in Maryland – the
18 equivalent of 50 per month. Of the total gun deaths, 363 were homicides, 220 were suicides, 5
19 were shootings of undetermined intent, and 9 were in the category of "legal intervention". In
20 addition, there were 10 unintentional gun deaths reported in the state, in 2001.

21 In 2001, homicide was the second leading cause of death for Maryland youth ages 15-24
22 years, followed by suicide. Over 8 of every 10 homicides and 42% of all suicides for this age
23 group were committed with firearms. In that year, 47% of Maryland gun homicides occurred in
24 Baltimore City, and there were also 933 non-fatal firearm injuries in Maryland serious enough to
25 require hospital admission.

26 The Center's Fact Sheet on Gun Violence in Baltimore, Youth Victimization reports:

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- 28 • Almost half of all gun deaths among Marylanders under age 20, in 2001, were Baltimore
City residents. 92% of these deaths were homicides.

 - 29 • The rate of gun homicide victimization among males ages 0-19 in Baltimore City was
30 over 5 times higher than the statewide rate for this group during 2001, the firearm
31 homicide rate among 15-19 year olds in Baltimore was 75.4 per 100,000 population,
32 which was 10 times the national rate of 7.5 per 100,000.

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

Council Bill 06-0165R

- 1 • Among the 50 U.S. states, Maryland ranked 3rd in firearm victimization among youth
2 under age 18, during 1995-1999. During the same period, Maryland also had the highest
3 rate of handgun murders committed by youth under age 18. These high rates were
4 primarily attributable to the youth homicide victimization and perpetration rates in
5 Baltimore City.
- 6 • During the 1990s, the rate of firearm homicide victimization among youths ages 15-19
7 *decreased* by 44% nationally, while it *increased* by 40% in Baltimore City.
- 8 • In a study sample of 14-18 year old incarcerated males mostly from the Baltimore area,
9 71% reported that they had owned a gun and/or carried one outside of their home.
- 10 • In the same study sample, 2/3rds of the youth had acquired at least 1 firearm prior to
11 being incarcerated, with nearly 1/2 acquiring multiple guns. The mean age of initial
12 acquisition was 13.7 years. The most common way youth acquired their 1st gun was via a
13 cash purchase or a trade for drugs; another 24% found their 1st gun; and 28% received it
14 as a gift. 29% of youth who purchased, traded, or were given their 1st gun received it
15 from someone who “sold a lot of guns.”

16 This study, from a world renown university with an intimate knowledge of the communities
17 surrounding it, has a chilling effect on all who wish to ignore the plight of youth in our City. It
18 begs the question why hasn't something more been done to address this issue, and, more
19 importantly, what can the Commission, with assistance from state and local agencies, do to stop
20 the killing of their sisters and brothers?

21 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
22 Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Director of the Department of Juvenile Services, the
23 Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Baltimore Health Commissioner, the Director of the
24 Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, and the Chief of School Police for the Baltimore City
25 Public School System are requested to brief the Commission and the City Council on the current
26 homicide rate among youth, the effect of limited length of life expectation on the behavior of
27 certain youth, and the response of the criminal justice system to youthful offenders; to assess the
28 ability of existing law enforcement, education, mental health, and faith-based programs to
29 address the educational, psychological, and spiritual needs of youth who are involved in
30 antisocial behavior; and to engage the Commission and Baltimore's youth in the formulation of
31 youth-driven policies that would better address the needs of their generation and result in a de-
32 escalation of the juvenile homicide rate in Baltimore City.

33 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
34 Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Director of the Department of Juvenile Services, the
35 Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Baltimore Health Commissioner, the Director of the
36 Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, the Chief of School Police for the Baltimore City Public
37 School System, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.