

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0172R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Harris, D'Adamo, Kraft, Clarke, Curran, Conaway, Welch,
Mitchell

Introduced and read first time: May 1, 2006

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Department

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Baltimore City Police Patrol Cars – Take Home Policy**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City Police Commissioner to study the efficacy of
4 adopting a take-home patrol car program for Baltimore City police officers and to report to
5 the City Council on the success or failure of take-home patrol car policies in other
6 subdivisions across the country and the comparative advantages and disadvantages of
7 adopting a take-home patrol car policy for City officers.

8 **Recitals**

9 Research reported by PoliceOne.Com, an organization of over 100,000 law enforcement
10 personnel shows that one of the most important decisions that an agency has to make about its
11 patrol cars is whether to permit its officers to take the vehicles home and use them as both rolling
12 offices and personal transportation.

13 One of the greatest advantages of a take-home patrol policy is the increased visibility of
14 police officers in their communities and on the roadways. However, it has been found the
15 greatest advantage of allowing police officers to take-home patrol cars is the ready deployment
16 of an off-duty officer to critical incidents. “Because an officer has his or her gear and a car at all
17 times, he or she can roll within a few minutes notice. The result is that off-duty officers can
18 respond more rapidly to hostage, barricade, or active-shooter situations.”

19 Another benefit of take-home patrol cars is that a take-home policy can help an agency fill its
20 ranks. Police departments that offer such policies can use them as recruiting tools. The website
21 of the Pierce County, Washington Sheriff’s Department promotes the availability of take-home
22 cars for all deputy sheriffs as a “perk.” Take-home cars have even been an acknowledged factor
23 in why some officers left one agency for another.

24 Because patrol cars are often run 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and through a wide range of
25 driving conditions and demands for constant shifts in speeds, keeping the units in good repair is
26 a full-time job. In a bid to establish and maintain greater accountability for patrol car operation
27 and upkeep, many police agencies have found that when officers are assigned their own take-
28 home patrol cars, they tend to be more responsible with them. In addition, allowing the cars to
29 be taken home, means agencies no longer have to maintain garage facilities.

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

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1 A study commissioned by the city of Tacoma, Washington, concluded that by allowing
2 officers to drive to and from work in their patrol cars, the City a saved significant amount of
3 money a year. Pierce County, Washington’s Sheriff notes that while most patrol cars may last a
4 police department 1 or 2 years, their cars not only last an average of 6 years but are so well-
5 conditioned that they can be resold to smaller subdivisions for their police forces.

6 It has been acknowledged that not one of the police districts in Baltimore City is manned at
7 the appropriate level. Allowing police officers to take home their patrol cars would give the
8 police a more visible presence, increase the perception of community safety, and, hopefully, help
9 to deter those criminal opportunists who find those who live in their neighborhood easy and
10 convenient prey.

11 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
12 Baltimore City Police Commissioner is requested to study the efficacy of adopting a take-home
13 patrol car program for Baltimore City police officers and to report to the City Council on the
14 success or failure of take-home patrol car policies in other subdivisions across the country and
15 the comparative advantages and disadvantages of adopting a take-home patrol car policy for City
16 officers.

17 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Commissioner review the Police Department’s
18 conclusion on the fiscal impact of a take-home patrol car policy with the Director of Finance.

19 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
20 Baltimore City Police Commissioner, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor’s Legislative
21 Liaison to the City Council.