



Councilman Mark Conway
Chair *Public Safety and Government Operations Committee*

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10/13/2021

Dear City Administrator Christopher Shorter,

On February 12, 2021, the Public Safety and Government Operations committee passed Bill 21-0014: Baltimore City Fire Department – Reporting Requirements, introduced by Councilman Kristerfer Burnett.

The legislation requires the Baltimore City Fire Department to come before the committee during each phase of the pre-employment screening process to evaluate recruitment strategies. In these hearings, BCFD is to offer the latest race, gender, and city residency data, and share all steps taken to improve equity in the hiring process. Baltimore City is the only jurisdiction in the country that has implemented this type of monitoring program to correct the historic problems that our fire department has experienced in the recruitment and hiring process.

When the BCFD and the Department of Human Resources came before the Public Safety and Government Operations Committee on August 11, 2021, the agencies informed us that 2,994 candidates had applied for the EMT/Firefighter job announcement and 2,858 of those applicants were invited to participate in the written test phase of the process. During the three-day testing process (Tuesday, August 31st -Thursday, September 1st) only 778 applicants participated, and 618 successfully passed the written test. It is concerning 2,080 applicants were effectively lost by the start of the testing period. We must identify what caused this massive attrition of applicants and course-correct before the process continues.

On behalf of the Public Safety and Government Operations committee, I am requesting the following:

- When BCFD hosts its Physical Ability Test and Oral Board Interviews, DHR use the NeoGov Self-Scheduling application to allow candidates to pick the testing sessions that are most conducive for their schedule.
- A schedule of dates and times when the BCFD can host interested Councilmembers at the fire academy to give them a tour of the Physical Ability Test course.
- A full schedule of the practice sessions the BCFD will host for eligible candidates who participate in the Physical Ability Test. We ask that sessions be made available during the day, evening, and weekend to accommodate all eligible candidates. And finally, to track all candidates who participate in the practice sessions to evaluate the impact of practice on test outcomes.
- The complete schedule of dates and times when the BCFD will be hosting the official Physical Ability Test.

Thank you for your attention to these requests, and we hope these changes will ensure equity throughout the rest of the pre-employment screening process.

Sincerely,

Mark S Conway Jr.

Mark S. Conway, Jr.