

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 12-0008R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmember Holton, President Young, Councilmembers Middleton,  
Reisinger, Clarke, Stokes, Cole, Branch, Mosby, Henry, Scott, Kraft, Curran, Welch

Introduced and read first time: January 9, 2012

Assigned to: Budget and Appropriations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Finance

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Quarterly Budget Briefings**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on the Chief of the Finance Department's Bureau of Budget and  
4 Management Research to brief the City Council on how the City's actual finances compare to  
5 its budgeted projections in a timely manner after the close of each quarter in the City's fiscal  
6 year.

7 **Recitals**

8 For the last several years, the City of Baltimore, like governments at all levels throughout the  
9 nation, has had to address significant gaps between projected revenues and expenditures. This  
10 trend seems likely to continue, with the Finance Department projecting shortfalls of \$52 million,  
11 \$96 million, and \$123 million over the next three fiscal years.

12 In order to address these shortfalls, the City Council has had to approve a variety of measures  
13 to both cut City expenses and raise additional revenue. Some of these measures have been more  
14 effective than originally estimated, and others less so.

15 However, due to the way that budget reporting is currently handled, it often takes quite some  
16 time before it is clear to either the public at large, or their representatives on the City Council,  
17 which measures are successful or where projections are falling short. This lack of timely  
18 information undermines the public's ability to understand the City's finances or meaningfully  
19 participate in the budget process. It also makes it more difficult for the Council to assess what  
20 further measures could best be used to ensure balanced budgets going forward.

21 Greater transparency about how closely actual expenditures and revenues are adhering to  
22 budget projections would greatly help to both inform and educate stakeholders throughout  
23 Baltimore about the City's financial realities. More, and better, ideas about how to address these  
24 realities could then be developed.

25 Accordingly, the City Council should be regularly and publically briefed about how closely  
26 the City's finances are adhering to the budgeted projections on a quarterly basis. A mechanism  
27 for ensuring that these briefings continue in a timely manner after the close of each quarter on a  
28 permanent basis should also be developed.

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

## Council Bill 12-0008R

1 In these volatile times, when events half a world away can radically alter the economy's  
2 trajectory almost overnight, and unexpected changes to State or Federal policies could  
3 substantially affect the funds available to the City at any time, the Council simply cannot afford  
4 to rely on stale projections when making decisions. More frequent updates are clearly necessary,  
5 and quarterly reports should not be unduly burdensome for the Department of Finance to arrange.

6 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
7 Council calls on the Chief of the Finance Department's Bureau of Budget and Management  
8 Research to brief the City Council on how the City's actual finances compare to its budgeted  
9 projections in a timely manner after the close of each quarter in the City's fiscal year.

10 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
11 Finance Director, the Chief of the Finance Department's Bureau of Budget and Management  
12 Research, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.