

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry, *Sault Dorsey, Bunnell, Bullock, W. SUGG*

Prepared by: Department of Legislative Reference

Date: February 5, 2020

Referred to: **RESOLUTION** Committee

Schlefer
Purcell
Reisinger

Also referred for recommendation and report to municipal agencies listed on reverse.

CITY COUNCIL 20-0196R

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

Request for State Action – Ranked Choice Voting or Open Primaries

FOR the purpose of calling on the state to pass enabling legislation that authorizes Baltimore City to adopt either a ranked choice or open primary election voting system, to ensure inclusive and democratic elections for City officials.

Bill [Signature]
[Signature]
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****The introduction of an Ordinance or Resolution by Councilmembers at the request of any person, firm or organization is a courtesy extended by the Councilmembers and not an indication of their position.**

Agencies

_____	Baltimore City Public School System	_____	Department of Public Works
_____	Baltimore Development Corporation	_____	Department of Real Estate
_____	City Solicitor	_____	Department of Recreation and Parks
_____	Comptroller's Office	_____	Department of Transportation
_____	Department of Audits	_____	Fire Department
_____	Department of Finance	_____	Health Department
_____	Department of General Services	_____	Mayor's Office of Employment Development
_____	Department of Housing and Community Development	_____	Mayor's Office of Human Services
_____	Department of Human Resources	_____	Mayor's Office of Information Technology
_____	Department of Planning	_____	Office of the Mayor
_____	Other: _____	_____	Police Department
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____
_____	Board of Estimates	_____	Environmental Control Board
_____	Board of Ethics	_____	Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System
_____	Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals	_____	Labor Commissioner
_____	Comm. for Historical and Architectural Preservation	_____	Parking Authority Board
_____	Commission on Sustainability	_____	Planning Commission
_____	Employees' Retirement System	_____	Wage Commission
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____

Boards and Commissions

_____	Board of Estimates	_____	Environmental Control Board
_____	Board of Ethics	_____	Fire & Police Employees' Retirement System
_____	Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals	_____	Labor Commissioner
_____	Comm. for Historical and Architectural Preservation	_____	Parking Authority Board
_____	Commission on Sustainability	_____	Planning Commission
_____	Employees' Retirement System	_____	Wage Commission
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____
_____	Other: _____	_____	Other: _____

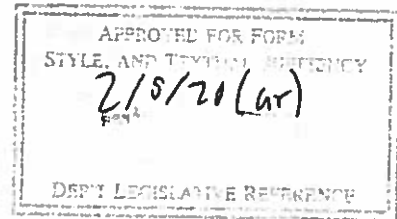
Council Bill 20-0196R

1 truly represents them and can be responsive to their needs. However, much like the effort to
2 align our municipal and national election cycles, this is a change that would need alterations to
3 State law to enact.

4 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the City
5 Council calls on the state to pass enabling legislation that authorizes Baltimore City to adopt
6 either a ranked choice or open primary election voting system, to ensure inclusive and democratic
7 elections for City officials.

8 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the
9 Mayor, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations
10 to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House
11 Speaker, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

INTRODUCTORY*
CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL _____ R
(Resolution)



Introduced by: Councilmember Henry

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

Request for State Action – Ranked Choice Voting or Open Primaries

FOR the purpose of calling on the state to pass enabling legislation that authorizes Baltimore City to adopt either a ranked choice or open primary election voting system, to ensure inclusive and democratic elections for City officials.

Recitals

Baltimore, unlike most major cities, selects party candidates for the general election through partisan primaries. Since Baltimore voters are overwhelmingly registered Democrats and no non-Democrat has been elected to a major City office for decades, this effectively means that the preferences of Baltimore's thousands of non-Democratic voters have no impact on the selection of our elected officials.

Equally troubling is the fact that a primary candidate can secure the nomination and the party's sole spot on the general election ballot, with a plurality of votes rather than an outright majority, which means that in a crowded field of candidates the party nomination can easily go to someone who a majority of primary voters actually voted against. Under these circumstances, we could find ourselves in a city of well over half a million being governed by people who were the first choice of only a few thousand residents – a profoundly anti-democratic result.

Ranked choice voting and open primaries encourage candidates to make more voter contact than the traditional style of voting. Aiming to reach as many voters as possible, instead of catering towards a certain demographic, elects more diverse representation. Furthermore, candidates are less likely to negatively campaign because they are still working to rank somewhere on the voters' ballots. Creating a system that incentivizes civility over cynicism is an essential to move democracy forward.

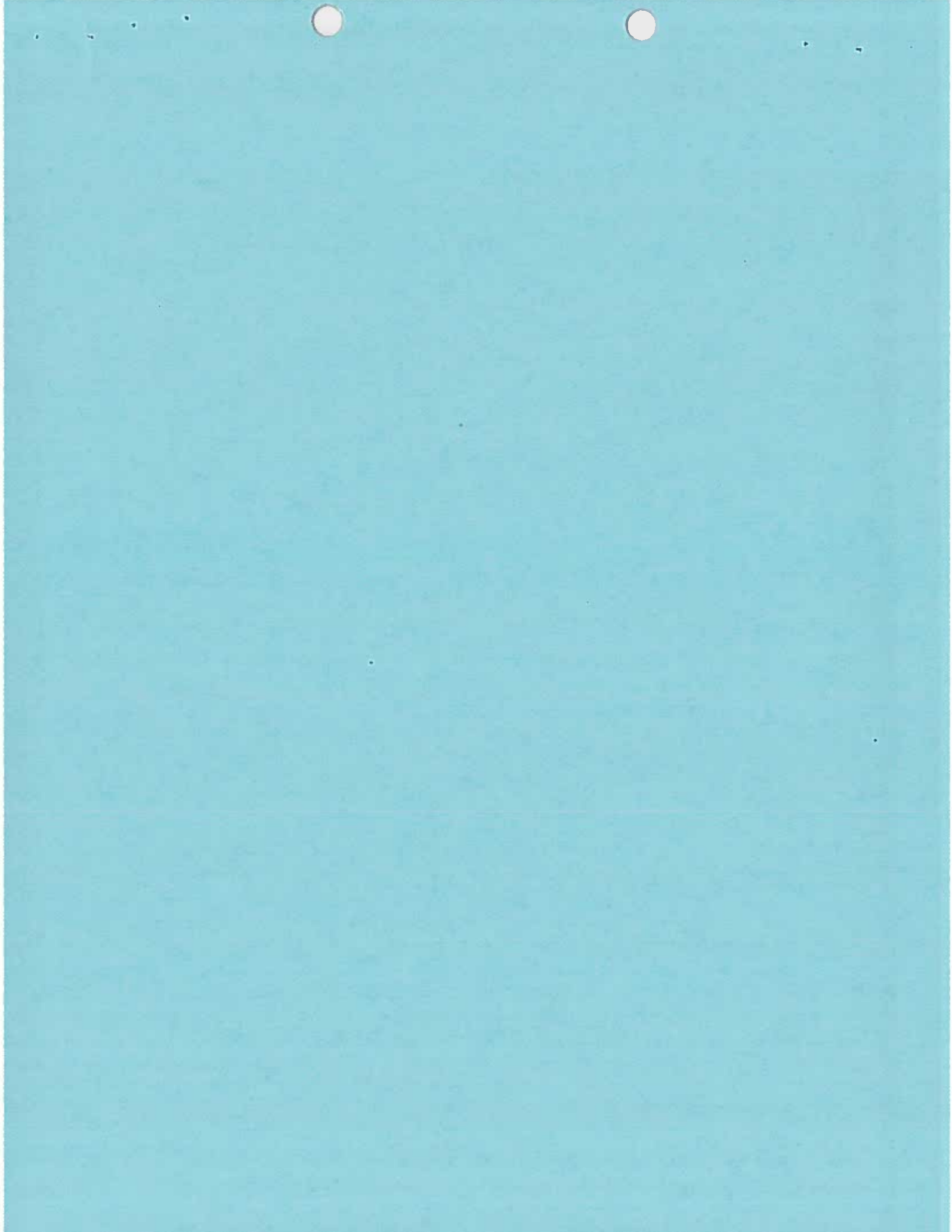
Many other communities – including more than 80% of the United States' 50 largest cities with elected mayors – avoid these issues by either having ranked choice voting or an open primary system. Under these systems, all qualified candidates for office, regardless of party affiliation, run in one primary election open to all voters. To be elected, a candidate must then secure a majority of votes in either the primary or a subsequent general election between the top 2 vote getters. Adopting either of these approaches ensures that all voters have a say in who will govern them and prevents a candidate from being elected without genuine support from a majority of voters.

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Baltimore would be well served to adopt a more democratic and inclusive approach, particularly at a time when so many Baltimoreans are questioning whether or not our government truly represents them and can be responsive to their needs. However, much like the effort to align our municipal and national election cycles, this is a change that would need alterations to State law to enact.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the City Council calls on the state to pass enabling legislation that authorizes Baltimore City to adopt either a ranked choice or open primary election voting system, to ensure inclusive and democratic elections for City officials.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Mayor, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House Speaker, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.



ACTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL

FIRST READING (INTRODUCTION) _____ Feb 10 20 20

PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON _____ 20 _____

COMMITTEE REPORT AS OF _____ 20 _____

_____ FAVORABLE _____ UNFAVORABLE _____ FAVORABLE AS AMENDED _____ WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

SECOND READING: The Council's action being favorable (unfavorable), this City Council bill was (was not) ordered printed for
Third Reading on:

_____ 20 _____

_____ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING _____ 20 _____

_____ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING (ENROLLED) _____ 20 _____

_____ Amendments were read and adopted (defeated) as indicated on the copy attached to this blue backing.

THIRD READING (RE-ENROLLED) _____ 20 _____

WITHDRAWAL _____ 20 _____

There being no objections to the request for withdrawal, it was so ordered that this City Council Ordinance be withdrawn from the files of the City Council.

President

Chief Clerk