

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 18-0080R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Young, Councilmembers Henry, Burnett, Scott, Schleifer, Pinkett,
Costello, Bullock, Reisinger, Cohen, Middleton, Clarke, Stokes, Sneed

Introduced and read first time: April 23, 2018

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

Committee Report: Favorable

Adopted: June 25, 2018

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Traffic Light Synchronization

1
2 FOR the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights
3 city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore’s “Don’t Block the Box”
4 program.

Recitals

5
6 On April 18th the Department of Transportation announced plans to begin stepped up
7 enforcement of State law prohibiting motorists from stopping within an intersection. According
8 to the announcement, this new “Don’t Block the Box” program will begin issuing warnings on
9 May 1st and will issue citations with \$90 fines and a license point starting a month later on June
10 1st.

11 Gridlock and excessive delays in traffic are genuine problems in Baltimore, but they are
12 problems with more than one cause. Drivers who would be subject to this new enforcement
13 could be one of those causes, but they could also be victims of other problems who unwittingly
14 become stuck in an intersection.

15 Focusing on only one cause of Baltimore’s traffic woes is unlikely to be effective on its own,
16 and could have unintended consequences. Ensuring that traffic lights city-wide are properly
17 synchronized ahead of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation’s “Don’t Block the Box”
18 program will assist motorists in adjusting to the Administration’s new traffic initiative, making it
19 more likely to succeed in its goal of improving traffic flows and less likely to penalize drivers
20 inadvertently stuck because of situations beyond their control.

21 In addition to helping motorists adjust to the “Don’t Block the Box” program, properly
22 synchronized lights provide numerous additional benefits to motorists and pedestrians. Research
23 from the Federal Highway Administration has found that traffic signal management can lead to
24 improved air quality, reduced fuel consumption, less aggressive driving, and better traffic flow.

25 Until the City has taken steps to ensure that traffic lights are properly synchronized and are
26 not contributing to gridlock, it would be premature to begin aggressive enforcement actions

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

Council Bill 18-0080R

1 against drivers that could interfere with their ability to legally operate a vehicle. Taking a
2 comprehensive approach to Baltimore's gridlock problem is both more appropriate and more
3 likely to result in real change.

4 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
5 Council calls on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are
6 properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

7 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
8 Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's legislative liaison to the City Council.