

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 09-0150R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Conaway, Kraft, Cole, Branch, Holton, Middleton, Reisinger,
Clarke, Curran

Introduced and read first time: September 21, 2009

Assigned to: Public Safety and Health Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Criminal
Justice, Health Department

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Police Actions – Treatment of Dogs**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore Police Commissioner to report to the City Council
4 on the treatment of dogs during police response to citizens' calls for assistance, service of
5 arrests warrants, or the execution of raids for drug-related and other criminal activities.

6 **Recitals**

7 In July 2008, police mistakenly raided the home of the Mayor of Berwyn Heights, a small
8 town in Prince Georges County. The raid, a result of a botched distribution scheme the Mayor
9 had no connection to, made headlines around the world, not only because the victim was a sitting
10 Mayor, but because police killed the Mayor's two pet Labradors. One dog was shot four times,
11 the other twice, once from behind as the dog fled.

12 Media reports of the incident included quotes from the police that what had been done was
13 "standard operating procedure". The public was made aware that the shooting of dogs by police
14 has become disturbingly common across the country. *Dogs in a Deadly Crossfire*, *The Daily*
15 *Beast*, July 19, 2009, reports that officials of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty
16 to Animals sees 250 to 300 incidents per year in media reports and estimates another 1,000
17 aren't reported.

18 *SWAT Gone Wild in Maryland*, *Reasononline*, July 13, 2009, reports that in November 2007,
19 Prince George's police raided the wrong home of a couple in Accokeek. Although the couple
20 presented the police with evidence that they were at the wrong address, the police detained them
21 at gunpoint. The couple asked the police if they could bring their pet boxer in from the
22 backyard. The police refused. Moments later, the police shot and killed the dog.

23 The public outcry against such incidents in which family pets were harmed or killed led to
24 the passage of state legislation. *The 90 Day Report: A Review of the 2009 Legislative Session* –
25 beginning January 1, 2010, a "law enforcement agency" that maintains a SWAT
26 team must report the following information to the Governor's Office of Crime Control and
27 Prevention (GOCCP) and the appropriate county or municipal governing body, on a biannual
28 basis:

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

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- 1 • the number of times the team was activated and deployed by the law enforcement
- 2 agency in the previous six months;
- 3 • the name of the county and/or municipality and zip code of the location where the
- 4 team was deployed for each activation;
- 5 • the reason for each activation and deployment;
- 6 • the legal authority, including type of warrant, if any, for each activation and
- 7 deployment; and
- 8 • the result of each activation and deployment.

9 A summary of the biannual reports must be prepared each year by GOCCP and submitted
10 to the Governor, the General Assembly, and each law enforcement agency by September 1.

11 Baltimore City is home to many dog-lovers. Service providers estimate that there are nearly
12 15,000 beloved canines that are loyal members of countless households. It is our duty to protect
13 these friends that cannot protect themselves. To that end, the Council will undertake a review of
14 police policy when dealing with households that could possibly harbor guilty humans – but are
15 not likely to harbor canine occupants deserving of the death penalty.

16 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
17 Baltimore Police Commissioner is requested to report to the City Council on the treatment of
18 dogs during police response to citizens' calls for assistance, service of arrests warrants, or the
19 execution of raids for drug-related and other criminal activities.

20 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to Mayor, the
21 Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Director, Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Baltimore
22 Health Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to City Council.