

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 20-0192R
(Resolution)

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

Introduced and read first time: January 13, 2020

Assigned to: Legislative Investigations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Baltimore City Board of Elections

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Are We Prepared for Election 2020?**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting the President of the Baltimore City Board of Elections and the
4 Election Director for the Baltimore City Board of Elections to brief the City Council on
5 preparations and readiness for the upcoming 2020 primary and general elections in Baltimore
6 City.

7 **Recitals**

8 A democracy is ineffective if the citizens cannot exercise their right to vote. After years of
9 election day SNAFUs, the citizens of Baltimore have grown wary of the City Board of Elections'
10 ability to effectively hold an election without incident, undermining faith in the basics of our
11 democracy.

12 In 2016, due to the shortage of election judges, many polling locations failed to open on time,
13 leaving many to abandon their chances to vote during critical early morning voting hours.

14 According to the Baltimore Sun, the State Election Board determined that 1,188 provisional
15 ballots that year that were scanned without eligibility verification, while an additional 465 were
16 never included in the tally at all.

17 In 2018, when voters arrived at their polling locations, many were once again met with
18 locked doors, broken voting machines, and insufficiently trained judges. Some voters only
19 learned that their polling location was relocated when they arrived. One polling place had been
20 closed by the school system months beforehand, yet this information did not make it to that
21 precinct's voters.

22 This is not a recent phenomenon. Baltimore City has not had an incident-free election in
23 some time. In 2006, a shortage of well-trained judges caused four polling sites to open more than
24 five hours late.

25 The citizens of Baltimore must be assured that the Board of Elections is properly prepared for
26 the upcoming 2020 Elections. The City Council requests the presence of the Election Director
27 and the President of the Board of Elections to testify as to the Board's readiness to hold elections
28 without incident.

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

Council Bill 20-0192R

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the City
2 Council invites the President of the Baltimore City Board of Elections and the Election Director
3 for the Baltimore City Board of Elections to brief the City Council on preparations and readiness
4 for the upcoming 2020 primary and general elections in Baltimore City.

5 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the President of the
6 Baltimore City Board of Elections, the Elections Director for the Baltimore City Board of
7 Elections, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.