

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 20-0199R
(Resolution)

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

Introduced and read first time: February 24, 2020

Assigned to: Health Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Health Department, Police Department, Baltimore City Public School System, Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office, Department of Social Services, Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Office of the Mayor

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Well-being of the Transgender Community in Baltimore**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Health Department,
4 Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Mayor’s Office of
5 Homeless Services, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore City
6 Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, the Baltimore
7 City Department of Social Services, the Maryland State Health Department and Behavioral
8 Health Systems Baltimore to update the Council on services provided to and the general
9 well-being of the transgender community in Baltimore.

10 **Recitals**

11 Anti-transgender stigma, transphobia, and the dehumanization of transgender individuals is
12 prevalent in the media, politics and public policy. According to the Human Rights Campaign
13 Foundation’s (HRCF) 2018 report *Dismantling a Culture of Violence: Understanding*
14 *Anti-Transgender Violence and Ending the Crisis*, transgender and gender-expansive people face
15 stigma surrounding who they are from an early age. Often rooted in inaccurate beliefs and
16 politically-motivated attacks on transgender identities, this stigma erects barriers in virtually
17 every facet of life, denying transgender people the equal opportunity to succeed and be accepted
18 for who they are. In a Baltimore-based Be the Conversation (BTC) study, transgender and
19 non-binary Baltimoreans view stigma and transphobia as a leading contributor to their violence
20 experiences. This stigma and lack of general knowledge and acceptance has a profound impact
21 on the health, well-being, and safety of transgender individuals.

22 According to the HRCF report, there has been a slew of attacks on the transgender
23 community, including the Trump administration’s intention to redefine “sex” to exclude
24 transgender people from existing civil rights protections. Removing existing civil rights
25 protections increases the possibility of attack and greater discrimination towards transgender
26 individuals. Existing discrimination is found in unequal barriers to education, economic
27 development, housing, health care, and the justice system.

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

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1 In a report by GLSEN, the nation's leading education non-profit addressing LGBTQ issues in
2 K-12 schools, over half of transgender students (54%) have been denied access to restrooms that
3 are consistent with their gender and nearly half of transgender students (48%) have been
4 prevented from using their chosen name. In addition, the HRCF report indicates that 84% of
5 transgender youth do not feel safe in the classroom.

6 Extensive barriers to health care exist for the transgender community. Finding medical
7 professionals that respect and affirm their identities as well as insurance that covers medically
8 necessary procedures are on-going challenges. Transgender individuals report being denied care
9 simply because of their gender identity. In the Leading Innovation for Transgender Women's
10 Health and Empowerment (LITE) study, individuals cited safety in transit as a barrier to
11 accessing healthcare. Transphobia also leads to adverse mental health, including suicidality and
12 PTSD. Other barriers faced include unstable housing, increased rates of homelessness and
13 employment discrimination.

14 Transgender individuals suffer from an increased rate of violence. In the Supporting
15 Transgender Research and Opportunities in the Baltimore Environment (STROBE) study, 75%
16 of participants had experience physical violence in their lifetime. Violence is highly prevalent
17 for local transgender women of color, especially violence perpetrated by strangers and intimate
18 partner violence. Specifically, in Baltimore, police violence and harassment are among the
19 concerns that face the transgender community.

20 Black transgender women in Baltimore suffer from the added impacts of racism and sexism,
21 compounding the discrimination they face. Given the added obstacles they face, Black
22 transgender women are especially vulnerable, with many dealing with poverty, homelessness,
23 intimate partner violence, sexual assault, survival sex work, addiction, HIV and other STIs, and
24 general violence. There is an epidemic of violence against Black transgender women, with eight
25 Black transgender women having been killed in Baltimore City since 2012.

26 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
27 Council invites representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Health Department, Baltimore
28 Police Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the
29 Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil
30 Rights, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, the Baltimore City Department of Social
31 Services, the Maryland State Health Department and Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore to
32 update the Council on services provided to and the general well-being of the transgender
33 community in Baltimore.

34 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the the Mayor, the
35 Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the Baltimore Police Commissioner, the CEO of
36 Baltimore City Public Schools, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the
37 Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Director of the Baltimore City
38 Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Director of the
39 Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Secretary of the State Health Department, the
40 President and CEO of Behavioral Health System Baltimore, the Mayor's LGBTQ Affairs
41 Liaison, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.