

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 19-0163R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Pinkett, Dorsey, Bullock, Henry, Burnett, Cohen, McCray,  
Stokes, Reisinger, President Scott, Councilmembers Schleifer, Clarke, Sneed, Costello  
Introduced and read first time: September 9, 2019  
Assigned to: Budget and Appropriations Committee  
Committee Report: Favorable  
Adopted: October 28, 2019

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**A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING**

**1 Informational Hearing: “Closed Means Closed” – Clarifying 311 Services’ Approach to  
2 Resolving Requests**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from 311 Services, the Department of Public Works,  
4 the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Housing and Community  
5 Development, the Department of Recreation and Parks, BGE, and the Mayor’s Office of  
6 Performance and Innovation to appear before the City Council to discuss the effectiveness of  
7 311 resolving complaints and referring tasks to other agencies.

**8 Recitals**

9 Baltimore pioneered the use of centralized call centers for non-emergency complaints, as the  
10 first city to launch a 311 service in 1996, that went on to serve as a nationwide model. The  
11 expansion of 311 to include a much broader range of services around the turn of the century,  
12 under Mayor Martin O’Malley, and the introduction of a free 311 smartphone app for reporting  
13 and tracking service requests continued Baltimore’s path-breaking role in the field. During its  
14 existence, the 311 system has created over 13,000,000 service requests on behalf of Baltimore  
15 City residents, businesses, and visitors.

16 However, citizens still raise concerns about the efficiency of 311’s centralized complaint  
17 system and their ability to track the City’s progress towards resolving complaints. Some feel that  
18 the current system does not provide sufficient transparency as to who is responsible for a  
19 particular complaint or exactly what has been done to “close” a service request. In other  
20 instances, citizens are simply not made aware of what tools are available for tracking service  
21 requests and are left in the dark about the results of their calls.

22 All of this raises the simple question – is 311 working? How many service requests are  
23 satisfactorily resolved and how many instead go unanswered or are “closed” by the system but  
24 then require follow-up requests by residents who aren’t satisfied by the initial response? When  
25 service requests are referred to other City agencies, are customers connected to the proper people  
26 at those agencies to follow-up on their requests? Does 311 Services make repeated efforts, if  
27 necessary, to determine whether agencies have fulfilled service requests? If 311 Services directs  
28 a service request to the wrong agency, does it have a system in place so that similar service  
29 requests will be reported to the correct agency in the future? The City Council is interested in  
30 learning the answers to these and similar questions at an informational hearing.

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

**Council Bill 19-0163R**

1       **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
2 Baltimore City Council invites representatives from 311 Services, the Department of Public  
3 Works, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Community  
4 Development, the Department of Recreation and Parks, BGE, and the Mayor’s Office of  
5 Performance and Innovation to appear before the City Council to discuss the effectiveness of 311  
6 resolving complaints and referring tasks to other agencies.

7       **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Director of 311  
8 Services, Director of the Department of Public Works, Director of the Department of  
9 Transportation, the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development,  
10 the City Arborist, BGE’s Vice President of Support Services, the Director of the Mayor’s Office  
11 of Performance and Innovation, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.