

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0235R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Holton, Young, Kraft, Branch, Clarke, Reisinger, Mitchell,
Welch

Introduced and read first time: November 20, 2006

Assigned to: Education, Housing, Health, and Human Services Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Youth Commission, Mayor's Office of Children,
Youth, and Families, Baltimore City Public School System

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Organizational Meeting – A Committee to**
3 **Create A Bill of Rights for the Children and Youth of Baltimore City**

4 FOR the purpose of creating an organizational committee that will create a venue to engage the
5 children and youth of Baltimore City in all-inclusive process to identify issues of the most
6 import to their mental stability, physical health, substantive education, general well being,
7 and future spiritual and economic prosperity; to ratify these issues in an official document
8 comprising a Bill of Rights for the Children and Youth of Baltimore City to be adopted by
9 the City Council; and to ultimately call upon themselves, the community, organizations,
10 governmental entities, and elected officials, as is appropriate, to uphold the provisions of the
11 document through thought, word, deed, and legislative action.

12 **Recitals**

13 In April of this year, Baltimore City leaders announced that because of the strong
14 performance of the Baltimore economy, the Administration is proposing using the projected FY
15 2006 budget surplus to increase educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities for children
16 in Baltimore. The recommendation is that 56% of this year's projected surplus be allocated to
17 programs that directly support the quality of life for children in the City – ushering an era “where
18 budget decisions now focus on how best to leverage our fiscal responsibility in ways that
19 empower our children.” All totaled, the proposal would direct \$33.88 million in one-time funds
20 to boost the City's overall investment in children's-centered programs.

21 While “Children's Budget Expenditures” reflect an increase of nearly \$50 million in funding
22 for programs specifically for children over the last 2 years, the needs of Baltimore City's
23 children remain great as the number of children living in poverty in the City grew from about
24 35,000 in 1999 to nearly 42,000 in 2003, the last year for which U. S. Census Bureau figures are
25 available. And Baltimore, for the most part, mirrors the trends reported in the 2006 **KIDS**
26 **COUNT** Data Book, from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, that 3 out of 10 child well-being
27 indicators have worsened since 2000 – the number of children living in poverty, the percentage
28 of low-birth weight babies, and the number of children living in families where no parent has full
29 time employment – and there has been a slight improvement in 4 other areas – the child death
30 rate, the teen death rate, the teen birth rate, and the high school drop out rate.

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

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1 As City officials begin to place a heightened emphasis on the needs of children and youth, it
2 is important that the target population be brought into the process. Officials of Portland, Oregon
3 present a good model in the creation of a Children’s Bill of Rights that incorporates input from
4 thousands of young people in Portland and Multnomah County, affirming a list of fundamental
5 rights in 6 areas: youth voice; education; health; general well-being; family, home and
6 community; and recreation. The document, as highlighted in the November 6, 2006, issue of
7 *Nation’s Cities Weekly*, will serve to guide the development of city and county policies and to
8 help local leaders understand the needs of young people from a youth perspective and will
9 promote youth participation in decisions that affect them.

10 This Resolution seeks to secure for our children what has been ratified by the passage of *The*
11 *Bill of Rights for the Children and Youth of the City of Portland and Multnomah County*, the
12 preamble of which states: *We, the Children and Youth of the City of Portland, OR and*
13 *Multnomah County, in order to establish our basic rights, to protect our liberties as human*
14 *beings, to ensure ourselves a valuable education, and to assert the power to make choices for*
15 *ourselves, affirm this Bill of Rights for Children and Youth. The decision we make will affect our*
16 *individual futures and happiness, as well the future prosperity of our local community and of the*
17 *world. Therefore we call upon ourselves and upon other individuals, organizations, elected*
18 *officials, and government bodies to recognize these rights, to uphold them through observance,*
19 *and to defend them through progressive legislative measures.*

20 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That there is
21 an organizational committee that will create a venue to engage the children and youth of
22 Baltimore City in all-inclusive process to identify issues of the most import to their mental
23 stability, physical health, substantive education, general well being, and future spiritual and
24 economic prosperity; to ratify these issues in an official document comprising a Bill of Rights for
25 the Children and Youth of Baltimore City to be adopted by the City Council; and to ultimately
26 call upon themselves, the community, organizations, governmental entities, and elected officials,
27 as is appropriate, to uphold the provisions of the document through thought, word, deed, and
28 legislative action.

29 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That all children and youth in the City of Baltimore will be
30 invited and encouraged to participate in this process.

31 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That parents, school officials, parent-teacher associations,
32 members of the business community, members of the faith-based community, mentors, providers
33 of youth services, elected officials, and other stakeholders will be invited to assist the children
34 and youth in this endeavor.

35 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
36 Honorable Members of the Congressional Delegation, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the
37 Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the Executive
38 Director of the Mayor’s Office of Children, Youth and Families, the CEO, Baltimore City Public
39 Schools, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the
40 Director of Planning, the Commissioner of Housing, the Police Commissioner, the Director of
41 the Mayors Office of Employment Development, the Community Associations of the Planning
42 Department Directory, the members of the Greater Baltimore Committee, the members of the
43 Baltimore City Youth Commission, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.