

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 21-0055R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Stokes, McCray, Bullock, Glover, Ramos, Porter, Cohen
Introduced and read first time: August 16, 2021

Assigned to: Public Safety and Government Operations

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Baltimore Police Department,
Department of Finance, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, State's
Attorney's Office

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

Informational Hearing - Holding Gun Offenders Accountable

FOR the purpose of inviting the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Police Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, representatives from the Law Department, and representatives from the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to come before the City Council to discuss the prevalence of gun violence in the city, and how the establishment of a dedicated gun court could serve to better track these cases, make outcomes of these gun crimes more consistent, and deter people from having illegal weapons.

Recitals

Guns have played a role in too many crimes in Baltimore City for far too long. For the seventh consecutive year we are on pace to surpass the grime milestones of 300 homicides. Statistics show that 85% of the murders that are committed in the City are done by perpetrators using illegal firearms. In June of 2021, the Baltimore Police Department reported that there had been 162 homicides, 330 shootings, and 705 gun arrests this year. The presence and usage of illegal firearms will continue to be a leading cause of destruction in our communities if punishment for these crimes isn't swift and certain for offenders. In addition to in-court adjudication, gun court is characterized by pre-trial and post-trial services.

In an effort to curve this epidemic we should consider creating specialized gun courts. The nation's first gun court was established in Providence, Rhode Island in September 1994. The main intent of gun court is to move gun-related offenses through the criminal justice system more swiftly and efficiently in order to get those who have committed gun-related crimes off the streets as quickly as possible.

Gun court judges only hear cases involving illegal firearm possession, aggravated assaults, burglaries, and robberies that involve the use of guns, while other, more serious gun-related offenses, such as homicides are separated out. By consolidating these types of offenses under 1

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

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1 specialized program, the assets needed for prompt adjudication, and the coordination of efforts
2 by numerous agencies and non-profit organizations in reducing the number of illegal guns on the
3 streets of Baltimore could be improved.

4 In this informational hearing the Council would like a briefing on the legal parameters of
5 establishing a gun court program in Baltimore City, an overview of the work that the State's
6 Attorney's Gun Violence Enforcement Division does, and to learn what internal systems the
7 Police Department has in place to track firearms cases from arrest through prosecution.

8 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the City
9 Council invites the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Police Commissioner of the Baltimore
10 Police Department, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement,
11 representatives from the Law Department, and representatives from the Bureau of Budget and
12 Management Research to come before the City Council to discuss the prevalence of gun violence
13 in the city, and how the establishment of a dedicated gun court could serve to better track these
14 cases, make outcomes of these gun crimes more consistent, and deter people from having illegal
15 weapons.

16 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
17 Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Police Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department,
18 the Director of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, the City Solicitor,
19 the Director of the Department of Finance, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City
20 Council.