

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 06-0210R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: President Dixon, Councilmembers Young, Curran, Kraft, Holton, Spector,  
Mitchell, Reisinger, Clarke, Welch, Harris, Rawlings Blake, Conaway, Branch

Introduced and read first time: September 18, 2006

Assigned to: Committee of the Whole

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Police Department, Supervisors of  
Elections

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Emergency Resolution – Baltimore City Board of Elections – Election Day Glitches**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City Director of Elections and the President of the  
4 Baltimore City Board of Elections to report to the City Council on the systemic problems  
5 that led to polling place difficulties that prevented, discouraged, or delayed the participation  
6 of Baltimore City residents in the electoral process on primary election day, to identify the  
7 cause of election day glitches, and to present a comprehensive plan for remedies to address  
8 human or mechanical errors to ensure that similar, other, or additional problems will not  
9 plague the upcoming general election of November 7, 2006.

10 **Recitals**

11 Although the old election day joke in Baltimore is “vote early and often”, neither one was  
12 possible on this September 12, 2006, primary election day, the first because it is illegal to vote  
13 more than once in the same election and the second because some polling places opened more  
14 than 3 hours late, thwarting the intent of workers who planned to vote before leaving to go to  
15 their jobs because they would be unable to make it to their designated polling place before  
16 closing time.

17 By 11:00 a.m., the major newspapers in town were reporting problems at the polls – “tardy  
18 election judges in Baltimore caused delays at dozens of polling places this morning prompting  
19 some candidates to call for extended hours...” reported one, and “in Baltimore, a number of  
20 polling places opened as much as an hour late because some judges did not show up on time and  
21 others had trouble getting into the facilities...” reported the other.

22 Officials at the Baltimore City Board of Elections were quoted as explaining some of the  
23 election day problems as, in addition to late arrivals, poll workers being unfamiliar with several  
24 pieces of new voting equipment used for the first time in this election. Although poll workers go  
25 through a 3-hour training course, not enough of the new electronic check-in system, called e-poll  
26 book, was available to train everyone.

27 By the end of primary election day, it was determined that major mistakes affected the  
28 electoral process in the whole state of Maryland as equipment malfunctioned, or disappeared,  
29 vote totals were not transmitted on time, volunteers did not know how to turn on and operated

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

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1 the state's new elections equipment, and election judges were tardy or did not show up at their  
2 assigned polling places.

3 In response to the election day fiasco, the Maryland State Election's Administrator ordered  
4 Baltimore City, and Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Anne Arundel counties to immediately  
5 draft plans to remedy the myriad problems that afflicted Tuesday's elections by implementing a  
6 10 point remedy plan that, reportedly, includes the firing of tardy election judges, a refresher  
7 training session for all election judges, and specific assignments for each qualified poll worker.

8 The right of citizens to participate in the electoral process is a precious one, and for some it is  
9 a legacy hard won with the blood of our forefathers. To cause anyone to forfeit this right to  
10 democratic participation because of human or mechanical failing is unconscionable. Maryland  
11 voters should be able to focus on making informed decisions, without the added concern that the  
12 voting process is flawed or compromised.

13 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this  
14 Body requests the Baltimore City Director of Elections and the President of the Baltimore City  
15 Board of Elections to report to the City Council on the systemic problems that led to polling  
16 place difficulties that prevented, discouraged, or delayed the participation of Baltimore City  
17 residents in the electoral process on primary election day, to identify the cause of election day  
18 glitches, and to present a comprehensive plan for remedies to address human or mechanical  
19 errors to ensure that similar, other, or additional problems will not plague the upcoming general  
20 election of November 7, 2006.

21 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That the Baltimore City Director of Elections is requested  
22 to present the remedy plan for Baltimore City polling places at the hearing of this Resolution.

23 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
24 Honorable Members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation, the Honorable Members of the  
25 Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the Chair and  
26 Administrator of the Maryland State Board of Elections, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to  
27 the City Council.