

Andrew Kleine

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Andrew Kleine, Chief
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Bureau of the Budget and Management Research Room 432 City Hall (410-396-4941)
	SUBJECT	City Council Bill #12-0111

CITY of
BALTIMORE
MEMO



TO The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
Room 400, City Hall

DATE: January 15, 2015

Attention: Natawna Austin

Council Bill 12-0111 would submit to Baltimore voters a charter amendment to modify the vote by which the City Council may override a mayoral veto and repeal the mayoral authority to veto “items of appropriation.”

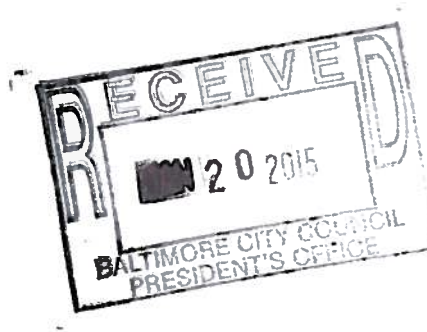
The Baltimore City Charter clearly defines the roles of the Mayor, Board of Estimates, and City Council in the development and enactment of the Ordinance of Estimates. The process is designed to be open and orderly and to ensure sound fiscal stewardship.

The charter requires that the Ordinance of Estimates be adopted by the City Council at least five days prior to the beginning of the fiscal year to which it is applicable. According to the Law Department, if the Ordinance of Estimates is not adopted by the beginning of the fiscal year, there are no annual appropriations and therefore no authority to make new spending commitments. In this event, absent a mandamus action to compel the Council to pass a budget, city government would effectively shut down.

The charter’s high threshold for overriding a mayoral veto (three-fourths of members) and its provision for a mayoral line-item veto serve to minimize the possibility of a government shutdown and the political and operational chaos a shutdown could cause.

The line-item veto is particularly important, because it allows for items of disagreement between the Mayor and Council to be isolated and dealt with apart from the rest of the budget, while the rest of the budget becomes effective in a timely manner. Resolving budget disagreements in an orderly manner that minimizes disruption to city operations is a hallmark of sound fiscal management.

cc: Henry Raymond
Angela Gibson



UF