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**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE**

Mission Statement

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the mission of the **Public Health and Environment Committee** is dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of Baltimore's residents by advancing policies that promote health equity, environmental justice, and sustainability. Recognizing the deep connection between public health and the environment, the committee works to reduce health disparities, improve access to essential services, and address climate-related challenges that impact communities.

**The Honorable Phylicia Porter
Chair**

PUBLIC HEARING

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2025
10:01 AM**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Resolution 25-0020R

Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore

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CITY OF BALTIMORE
BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR
ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES
NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR
100 N. HOLIDAY STREET
BALTIMORE MD, 21202

BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Health and Environment

Council Resolution: 25-0020R

Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore

Sponsor: *Councilmembers Porter, et al*
Introduced: *April 28, 2025*

Purpose:

FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Mayor’s Office, the Baltimore City Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department, the Baltimore City Public School System, the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, the Mayor’s Office of LGBTQ Affairs, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Office of the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Maryland Department of Health, and Behavioral Health System Baltimore to update the Council on services provided to, and the general well-being of, gay men in Baltimore.

Effective: Upon enactment.

Agency Reports

Health Department	Favorable
Office of LGBTQ Affairs	None as of this writing
Office of Equity and Civil Rights	Favorable
Baltimore City Police Department	Comments
Baltimore City Public School System	None as of this writing
Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City	None as of this writing
Department of Social Services	None as of this writing
Mayor's Office of Homeless Service	Favorable/Comments
Office of the City Administrator	None as of this writing

Analysis

Background

In light of recent social, medical, and legal attacks on the rights of gay men, the Baltimore City Council is asking for updates from key agencies, offices, and organizations on the issues facing gay men in Baltimore so that the Council may be best equipped to serve their needs amid a time of uncertainty.

On Wednesday, June 11, 2025 the committee will hold a hearing to heard from pertinent agency representatives, offices and/or organizations on this disquiet.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): Council Bill 25-0020R and all agency reports received as of this writing.

Analysis by: *Marguerite Currin*
Analysis Date: June 9, 2025

Direct Inquiries to: (443) 984-3485

**PUBLIC HEALTH AND
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

25-0020R

AGENCY REPORTS

SEE ATTACHED



**CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT**

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Mary Beth Haller, Interim Commissioner of Health, Baltimore City Health Department
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	May 29, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0020R - Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

This resolution calls for an informational hearing to be held to discuss the well-being of gay men in Baltimore City.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) strives to protect health, eliminate disparities, and enhance the wellbeing of everyone in our community through education, coordination, advocacy, and direct service delivery. This includes Baltimore City's LGBTQ community, including gay men. BCHD's myriad programs and services are open to all, regardless of sexual orientation.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the US Department of Health and Human Services, men who have sex with men are disproportionately impacted by HIV and syphilis.^{i,ii} Men who report male sexual contact represent the largest risk factor for new HIV infection, a change from earlier in the epidemic when use of injection drugs represented the largest risk category. Over 60% of individuals newly diagnosed with HIV each year in Baltimore City are men who report having male sexual contact, and over 40% of those living with HIV in Baltimore City identify as men with male sexual contact. Almost 70% of syphilis infections each year are among men, and of those 40% are among men who self-report sex with men as a risk factor.

BCHD operates several programs, services, and initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of HIV, syphilis, and other sexually transmitted infections and supporting those living with HIV. This work includes educating the public about sexual health and treatment and prevention options, providing clinical services including testing, treatment, and the provision of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), providing and coordinating funding for Ryan White providers for HIV treatment, including promotion of clinics that are free of stigma, addressing social determinants of health, including those that disproportionately may impact gay men, as they relate to sexual and overall health and well-being, funding partners who work directly with the gay community, and working to reduce stigma associated with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections throughout the Baltimore City community.

BCHD recognizes that the wellbeing and health of gay men extends far beyond HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, and that social determinants of health, including housing, employment, stigma, violence, and others, are instrumental in all aspects of health and wellbeing. As an agency, we envision an equitable, just, and well Baltimore where everyone has the opportunity to be healthy and to thrive. As such, we respectfully request a **favorable** report and support the Council holding an informational hearing to discuss the wellbeing of gay men in Baltimore City.

ⁱ US CDC. (2024). Fast Facts: HIV and Gay and Bisexual Men. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/data-research/facts-stats/gay-bisexual-men.html#:~:text=At%20a%20glance,for%20gay%20and%20bisexual%20men>.

ⁱⁱ US Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). Healthy People 2030 - Reduce the syphilis rate in men who have sex with men — STI-05. Retrieved from <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/sexually-transmitted-infections/reduce-syphilis-rate-men-who-have-sex-men-sti-05>



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Erin C. Murphy Esq. – Chief of Staff and Government Affairs – Baltimore Police Department
CC	Mayor’s Office of Government Relations
DATE	06/02/25
SUBJECT	25R-0020 Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Baltimore City Police Department has reviewed Resolution 25R-0020 for the purpose of updating the City Council on the wellbeing of gay men when they interact with a member of the Police Department and when they are employed or seeking employment within the Department.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Baltimore Police Department supports this resolution and is committed to creating an unbiased and inclusive working environment for gay men at the Police Department. The Department is committed to providing fair, respectful, and equitable services to gay men in all interactions with departmental personnel.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Baltimore Police Department does not anticipate a fiscal impact.

AMENDMENTS

The Baltimore Police Department has no requested amendments for Council Bill 25R-0020.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	MacKenzie Garvin, Director, Mayor's Office of Employment Development <i>MacKenzie Garvin</i>
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	May 30, 2025
SUBJECT	25-0020R – Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore

Position: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) has reviewed City Council Resolution 25-0020R - Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore for the purpose of providing an update to the Council on services provided in support of the well-being of gay men in Baltimore City.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

MOED is responsible for management and oversight of federal, state and City funds allocated for workforce and for designing and implementing strategies that improve outcomes for job seekers and employers.

At MOED we understand the unique barriers that gay men face when seeking employment. Despite the 2020 the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, discrimination against LGBTQ, there are still many employment challenges facing this community. According to a 2023 UCLA School of Law Williams Institute study examining the experiences of discrimination and harassment against nearly 2,000 LGBTQ workers, 47% of them have experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace at some point in their lives. This same study found that 33% of LGBTQ employees reported that they had left a job at some point in their lives because of how they were treated by their employer based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

MOED is an agency that is deeply committed to serving individuals facing barriers to

employment. We are an agency that works with any person regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or gender. To serve this commitment, MOED staff have had productive meetings with the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs focused on developing a workforce development programming tailored for the LGBTQ community. Additionally, we have shared platforms like Unite Us and the Access Points Flyer, which help connect community members to essential resources and services. These tools will complement any workforce initiatives by ensuring wrap-around support.

MOED will continue to seek opportunities to broaden our network of partners that work with LGBTQ individuals and provide services to any person that may seek or assistance.

FISCAL IMPACT

As drafted, this Resolution has minimal fiscal impact on MOED.



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Amber Greene, Chief Equity Officer Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights
ANALYST	Zachary Wellman, Equity Policy Analyst
CC	Mayor's Office of Government Relations
DATE	06/05/2025
SUBJECT	City Council Bill 25-0020R Informational Hearing – Well being of Gay Men in Baltimore

POSITION: Favorable

BILL SYNOPSIS

The Office of Equity & Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 25-0020R – Informational Hearing – Informational Hearing – Well being of Gay Men in Baltimore. This is a City Council Resolution that seeks to hold a hearing to provide information on the following:

- Call upon several Baltimore City agencies to testify via a public hearing.
- Request information from those agencies on the services provided to gay residents.
- Request information from those agencies on the general well-being of the gay community in Baltimore.

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The OECR is excited by the opportunity to present the services it provides to gay residents in a public hearing. While the office serves all Baltimoreans, regardless of protected characteristics such as gender identity, we would like to highlight some of the services the OECR provides that address some of the most pressing issues faced by gay men.

The OECR houses the Police Accountability Division, which is composed of the Police Accountability Board (PAB) and the Administrative Charging Committee (ACC). The PAB and ACC were created by Maryland state mandate under the Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 (Anton's Law).

The PAB receives all complaints of police misconduct, without limitation, involving the public and refers them to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation; however, the PAB

can not currently assign independent investigators to cases. The PAB also meets quarterly with law enforcement agencies to review and make recommendations on policies. It advises the Mayor and City Council on policing matters and appoints civilian members to other important civilian oversight boards. The ACC is a body of five (5) civilian members, including the Chair of the PAB and four other community members, who review the investigations for the complaints filed with the PAB and decide on disciplinary outcomes.

The PAB and ACC exist to ensure trust, safety, and fairness among the gay community of Baltimore when interacting with law enforcement. This is an important component to equity for gay men as, according to an ACLU national survey analyzed in *Policing Progress: Findings from a National Survey of LGBTQ+ People's Experiences* (2024), the ACLU found:

- 11% of Gay respondents report experiencing physical force by police, compared to 7.0% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.
- 20% of LGBTQ+ respondents report being arrested, compared to 13.6% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.
- 15% of Gay respondents experienced insulting language by the police as opposed to 9.9% of non-LGBTQ+ respondents.
- 82% of Gay respondents reported being likely to call the police for help, as opposed to 86.9% of non-LGBTQ+ people.

The OECR also houses the Community Relations Commission is the City Agency designated to enforce Article 4 of the Baltimore City Code, which prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, color, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, and **gender identity or expression**. Prohibited areas of discrimination include employment, public accommodations, education, health and welfare services, and housing.

The CRC receives and investigates discrimination complaints. They have the authority to subpoena information and witnesses, to hold public hearings when conciliation attempts fail, to issue cease and desist orders, and to take unresolved cases into court. The Commission also develops and monitors formally negotiated conciliatory agreements when a violation is found.

The CRC exists to protect the civil rights of Baltimore's gay community and address any discrimination they may face. This is necessary as, according to *Workplace Experiences of Transgender Employees*, a 2024 study by the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, 45% of cisgender LGBTQ+ respondents report being discriminated against or harassed in the workplace because of their gender identity/sexual orientation.

The work of the OECR to combat discrimination and police misconduct against gay men is particularly critical amid the numerous executive orders of the Trump Presidential Administration, namely Executive Order 14148 - *Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions* and Executive Order 14288 - *Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens*.

Executive Order 14148 - *Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions* marks a rollback of protections for gay men in Baltimore. The executive order rescinds the Biden Administration's Executive Order 14075 - *Advancing Equality for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,*

Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Individuals, which acknowledged federally that gay men face systemic discrimination and barriers in accessing programs and services in America. Executive Order 14075 focused on expanding access to comprehensive healthcare, preventing and addressing homelessness and housing instability; protecting students and educators in educational institutions; explicitly combating so-called “conversion therapy”; and ensuring that LGBTQI+ children did not face discrimination in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. With its rescission via Trump’s Executive Order 14148, gay men are now more susceptible to homophobic discrimination in the aforementioned areas. As a response, the City of Baltimore must be committed to vehemently opposing this discrimination and protecting the civil rights of lesbian women where the federal government refuses.

Executive Order 14288 - *Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement to Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens* promotes aggressive policing tactics and the further militarization of local law enforcement agencies while combatting efforts to hold law enforcement officers accused of misconduct accountable. Because of the disparities in the policing of lesbian women as noted above and the Trump Administration’s defiance against police accountability, it is imperative that the City of Baltimore, through the PAB and ACC, guarantee fair, transparent, and accountable policing.

CONCLUSION

The OECR deeply supports initiatives to improve the equity of Baltimore’s gay community and works tirelessly to uphold the civil rights of gay residents in the City. As such, the OECR respectfully requests a **favorable** committee report on City Council Bill 25-0015R and is happy to respond to any questions the committee may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Greene

Amber Greene
Director, Office of Equity & Civil Rights

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 25-0020R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Porter

Cosponsored by: Councilmembers Parker, Conway, Gray, Blanchard, Jones, Ramos, and
President Cohen

Introduced and read first time: April 28, 2025

Assigned to: Public Health and Environment Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Office of the City Administrator, Health Department,
Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Public School System, Mayor's Office of
Homeless Services, Mayor's Office of Employment Development, Office of LGBTQ Affairs,
Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, Department
of Social Services, Mayor's Office of African-American Male Engagement

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Well-being of Gay Men in Baltimore**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Baltimore City Health
4 Department, the Baltimore Police Department, the Baltimore City Public School System, the
5 Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the
6 Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the
7 Office of the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Department of Social
8 Services, the Maryland Department of Health, and Behavioral Health System Baltimore to
9 update the Council on services provided to, and the general well-being of, gay men in
10 Baltimore.

11 **Recitals**

12 Bigotry against gay men is a widespread problem, both globally and in the United States.
13 The second Trump administration has aggressively pursued policies which roll back gains made
14 towards equality for many American citizens. Shortly after returning to office, the Trump
15 White House rescinded a series of executive orders issued by President Biden, including those
16 that protected individuals from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in health care,
17 schools, and beyond. The new administration also included "gay" among the scores of terms
18 related to the experiences of LGBTQ people that it culled from the official White House website
19 in service of its broad attack on equality.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 25-0020R

1 According to the Baltimore Banner, the Maryland Department of Health and State
2 universities stand to lose in excess of \$300 million of federal funding due to terminated grants by
3 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Portions of these funds had been slated for
4 programs such as those increasing access to HIV prevention, disproportionately affecting
5 marginalized groups like gay Black men and people living with HIV. Further cuts to National
6 Institute of Health grants and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, made under the
7 guises of anti-diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and of cancelling foreign aid, chiefly serve
8 to endanger vulnerable populations and increase the risk of transmissible diseases in Baltimore
9 and worldwide.

10 This regressive push has further endangered gay men through a political culture that seeks to
11 claw back personal political and social rights, as seen in national pushes seeking to overturn
12 *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 U.S. 644 (2015), and thus repeal the right to marriage equality
13 nationally. In light of these social, medical, and legal attacks on gay rights, this City Council
14 seeks updates from key agencies, offices, and organizations on the issues facing gay men in
15 Baltimore so that the Council may be best-equipped to serve their needs amid a time of
16 uncertainty.

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the City
18 Council invites representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Baltimore City Health Department,
19 the Baltimore Police Department, the Baltimore City Public School System, the Mayor's Office
20 of Homeless Services, the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Mayor's Office of
21 LGBTQ Affairs, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Office of the State's
22 Attorney for Baltimore City, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Maryland
23 Department of Health, and Behavioral Health System Baltimore to update the Council on
24 services provided to, and the general well-being of, gay men in Baltimore.

25 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
26 Baltimore City Commissioner of Health, the Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Chief
27 Executive Officer of the Baltimore City Public School System, the Director of the Mayor's
28 Office of Homeless Services, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development,
29 the Director of the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ Affairs, the Director of the Baltimore City Office
30 of Equity and Civil Rights, the State's Attorney for Baltimore City, the Director of the Baltimore
31 City Department of Social Services, the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health, the
32 President and Chief Executive Officer of Behavioral Health System Baltimore, and the Mayor's
33 Legislative Liaison to the City Council.