

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 06-0208R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Conaway, D'Adamo, Young, Branch, Holton, Curran, Kraft,
Mitchell, Clarke, Spector
Introduced and adopted: August 14, 2006

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

1 Informational Hearing – Media Reporting of Registered Sex Offenders

2 FOR the purpose of investigating the efficacy of developing a program that enlists local media
3 outlets in a public service campaign to keep the public informed on the whereabouts of
4 registered sex offenders by publishing the name, address, and picture of offenders;
5 determining the success of publication of sexual offender registrants in other states; and
6 ascertaining the federal, state, or local legislation needed to implement a Baltimore City
7 program of media publication of information about registered sex offenders.

8 Recitals

9 The recent death of a 11-year-old boy, allegedly at the hands of a convicted child predator,
10 highlights the need for stricter laws governing sex offenders and greater public awareness of
11 child predators living in our communities. Despite existing law that makes it a crime for
12 registered sex offenders to set foot on school property, the suspect was allowed to accompany
13 the victim and his siblings to school and take part in school activities as a representative of the
14 family, until his past was discovered and he was banned from the campus by the school
15 principal.

16 According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, there are 549,083
17 registered sex offenders in the United States. The Maryland Departments of Public Safety and
18 Corrections reports that at the end of January 2006, there were 1,070 sex offenders in Baltimore
19 City. Of this number, 765 were child sex offenders and 275 were sexually violent sex offenders.
20 These offenders pose an enormous challenge to policy makers because they are largely unknown
21 to the communities in which they live, have a very high risk of re-offending, and the systems
22 meant to provide community supervision are not adequate to protect the public.

23 In response to the recognized need to provide for extended parole supervision for the most
24 dangerous violent sex offenders and child predators, a total of 54 bills was introduced in the
25 subject area of sexual offenses in the past session of the Maryland General Assembly, including
26 major initiatives that originated in the Governor's Office and the Office of the Attorney General.
27 Although the bills varied in approach, including provisions for stiffer sentencing and the
28 potential civil commitment of sexual predators, the omnibus bills that emerged (and ultimately
29 failed) primarily focused on extended supervision of offenders, using tools such as GPS tracking,
30 and changes in notification and registration requirements for the State's sex offender registry.

31 At the same time state officials debated sex offender legislation, the Congress was working
32 toward adoption of the Children's Safety Act of 2005 that was signed into law by the President
33 on July 27, 2006 expanding on the protection provided by Megan's Law by creating the 1st

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

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1 national online registry available to the public by zip code. Aimed at helping police find the
2 more than 100,000 or the nation's 550,000 registered sex offenders whose whereabouts are
3 unknown. Known as the Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act, the federal law creates
4 stricter requirements for sex offender registration and stricter prison sentences for offenders who
5 fail to register and keep their information current.

6 Not waiting for federal action, or fearing federal provisions did not go far enough to protect
7 children, subdivisions across the country adopted local and state legislation to address the
8 problem. For example, in 2005, City Council members proposed broadcasting information on the
9 City's cable channel about the more than 4,000 registered sex offenders living in Los Angeles. In
10 Illinois, the 91st General Assembly in 2000, adopted legislation that amended that state's Sex
11 Offender Registration Act to permit municipal police departments and county sheriffs to publish
12 photographs of sex offenders in newspapers or magazines and to disseminate those photographs
13 on the Internet or on television.

14 Enlisting the media's aid in informing the general public of the whereabouts of those who
15 would prey on our children is essential to protecting their psychological, physical, and emotional
16 welfare, and in some cases, their very lives.

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
18 Body will investigate the efficacy of developing a program that enlists local media outlets in a
19 public service campaign to keep the public informed about the whereabouts of registered sex
20 offenders by publishing the name, address, and picture of offenders; determine the success of
21 publication of sexual offender registrants in other states; and ascertain the federal, state, or local
22 legislation needed to implement a Baltimore City program of media publication of information
23 about registered sex offenders.

24 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor; the
25 Police Commissioner; the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and
26 Families; the Editors of the Baltimore Sun, the Baltimore Messenger, the Baltimore Times, the
27 Afro American, the Baltimore City Paper, the Baltimore Guide, the Baltimore Examiner, and the
28 Daily Record; the General Managers of TV Channel 2, 11, 13, 24, 45, 54, & 67; the Director of
29 Media Relations, Comcast Baltimore, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.