

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 12-0027R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Henry, Clarke, Curran, Stokes, Middleton, Holton, Branch,  
Kraft, President Young, Councilmembers Welch, Reisinger

At the request of: The Safe and Sound Campaign

Introduced and read first time: February 27, 2012

Assigned to: Education and Youth Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Housing and Community  
Development, Department of Finance

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Demolition Funds for Deconstruction**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign's request to dedicate a  
4 portion of the City's demolition budget to fund the deconstruction of vacant homes by  
5 ex-prisoners.

6 **Recitals**

7 The Education and Youth Committee of the Baltimore City Council held a roundtable  
8 discussion on January 19, 2012 that generated a number of ideas worth pursuing. One of the  
9 participants, the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign, presented the idea of dedicating a portion  
10 of the money spent by the City for demolition to fund the deconstruction of vacant houses by  
11 trained ex-prisoners.

12 This idea would take advantage of money that the City would be spending in any case to  
13 achieve multiple goals that would make the City a better place. The Safe and Sound Campaign  
14 advocates that the City take \$2 million in either new funds, or funds already allocated in the  
15 City's demolition line item, and use those funds to take down vacant homes in a more  
16 constructive way.

17 Deconstruction is a technique for removing a building by essentially taking it apart, rather  
18 than blowing it up, or knocking it down, as is done in traditional demolition. It has several  
19 attributes that make it preferable to traditional demolition methods.

20 First, it allows for many of the resources contained in the building to be reused rather than  
21 sent to a landfill. This is a more efficient and environmentally friendly methodology. The Safe  
22 and Sound Campaign estimates that adopting its funding target could prevent 40,000 tons of  
23 waste from being sent to our landfills.

24 Second, it is a more labor intensive procedure that creates more jobs and can teach workers  
25 more useful skills. A greater portion of the costs of taking a building down will go into wages  
26 for workers that are likely to stay in the City, rather than being spent on explosives or heavy  
27 equipment manufactured far from Baltimore.

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

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1 Third, the use of ex-prisoners helps to reintegrate former offenders who have paid their debt  
2 to society back into the community. Without jobs these returning individuals have no chance to  
3 succeed and are more likely to re-offend. Deconstruction work can provide them with a  
4 transitional job and give them an opportunity to learn valuable skills that can be applied to this  
5 growing “green” industry as well as traditional construction.

6 This is a creative idea that could help to address the blight caused by vacant homes in  
7 Baltimore’s neighborhoods while minimizing negative environmental impacts, maximizing the  
8 number of jobs and the percentage of spending that stays in the City, and smoothing the  
9 transition of ex-prisoners back into the community. It deserves to be further explored and  
10 supported.

11 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
12 Council supports the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign’s request to dedicate a portion of the  
13 City’s demolition budget to fund the deconstruction of vacant homes by ex-prisoners.

14 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
15 Housing Commissioner, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.