

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 11-0305R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Branch, Stokes, Conaway, Henry, Curran, Kraft

Introduced and read first time: July 18, 2011

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Police Commissioner, Department of Finance

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing - Tracking Police Involved Lawsuits**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, the
4 Law Department, and the Department of Finance appear before the Council to discuss the
5 reasons why an increase in funding for police involved litigation was required in the 2012
6 budget, explain the City's current process for tracking and learning from legal claims against
7 the Police Department, and explore how the information provided by these claims can be
8 better used to reduce the amount and cost of litigation against the Police Department.

9 **Recitals**

10 In order to close a multi-million dollar projected deficit, the City Budget adopted for fiscal
11 year 2012 necessarily included painful and difficult cuts to many important services. Still, a
12 handful of areas did see increased funding compared to FY 2011. One budget item that was
13 increased was spending on legal expenses for the Baltimore Police Department. According to
14 the FY2012 budget agency detail publication, "an additional \$846, 806 for judgements and an
15 additional \$653,194 for legal services" was added to the Police Department's budget.

16 These increasing legal judgements against the Police Department are a double burden for the
17 City. Not only do they siphon off scarce funds that could have been used to address other
18 pressing problems in Baltimore, but each judgement also can represent an instance where
19 citizens were avoidably harmed by the actions of officers whose job it is to protect them.
20 Because of this, it is especially troubling to see the costs for police litigation rising rather than
21 declining.

22 New York City has been faced with a similar combination of rising police litigation costs and
23 shrinking municipal budgets. There, the city's comptroller has proposed that the police
24 department adopt a more rigorous and systematic approach to tracking litigation against the
25 department. The idea is to help the department to zero in on the small number of officers who
26 may not be living up to what the public should expect of them as well as uncover areas where
27 additional training or new procedures could reduce negative interactions with citizens.

28 If specific problem areas can be identified in this way, acting proactively to address them
29 would save money while simultaneously improving relations with the community. It is therefore

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

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1 worth exploring whether these risk management strategies could be successfully implemented in
2 Baltimore as well.

3 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That
4 representatives from the Baltimore Police Department, the Law Department, and the Department
5 of Finance are requested to appear before the Council to discuss the reasons why an increase in
6 funding for police involved litigation was required in the 2012 budget, explain the City's current
7 process for tracking and learning from legal claims against the Police Department, and explore
8 how the information provided by these claims can be better used to reduce the amount and cost
9 of litigation against the Police Department.

10 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
11 Police Commissioner, the City Solicitor, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor's Legislative
12 Liaison to the City Council.