

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 18-0077R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Sneed, Henry, President Young, Councilmembers Dorsey,
Bullock, Burnett, Pinkett, Scott, Schleifer, Reisinger, Clarke, Stokes, Cohen
Introduced and adopted: April 16, 2018

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Supporting Public Workers' Right to Organize

1
2 FOR the purpose of supporting the freedom of all City employees to exercise their rights to a
3 voice and dignity on the job through joining together in strong unions; and urging the
4 Supreme Court to consider the legacy of Dr. King, the Memphis sanitation workers, and the
5 public benefit created by workers organizing in rendering its decision in the upcoming *Janus*
6 *v. AFSCME* case.

Recitals

7
8 **WHEREAS**, it is our belief that all families should have the means to thrive in safe and healthy
9 communities.

10 **WHEREAS**, the working people who make our city run ought to have good jobs that can
11 support families.

12 **WHEREAS**, over the last forty years, working people have become more productive than ever,
13 yet real wages are declining and CEOs make more than ever before: 347 times more than the
14 average person.

15 **WHEREAS**, 50 years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee,
16 where he marched and rallied in support of city sanitation workers on strike to demand their
17 dignity, their humanity, and their union be recognized.

18 **WHEREAS**, those Memphis sanitation workers and Dr. King carried signs proclaiming “I AM
19 A MAN” and struggled for basic freedoms: the freedom from discrimination, the freedom from
20 degrading work conditions, the freedom to come together in strong unions to improve their place
21 of work.

22 **WHEREAS**, still today, people across the country and in our city struggle for those same basic
23 freedoms and a high quality of life for their families.

24 **WHEREAS**, being able to come together in unions gives people – particularly women and
25 people of color – a powerful voice in speaking up for themselves, their families, and their
26 communities, and ensures they are treated with dignity and respect at work.

27 **WHEREAS**, when people stick together in unions, they gain the power in numbers to raise
28 wages and improve benefits like health care for themselves, their families, and all of our
29 communities.

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

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1 **WHEREAS**, people working collectively together in unions have won victories like the
2 40-hour work week, overtime pay, and health and safety standards, as well as advanced policies
3 especially important to women like paid leave, earned sick time, and reducing the gender pay
4 gap.

5 **WHEREAS**, when people can negotiate together for strong contracts, higher wages, and safer,
6 dignified working conditions, all of us benefit, our communities are stronger, and our entire
7 economy is made more fair.

8 **WHEREAS**, the Supreme Court is considering the case *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* which
9 may decide whether those who work in the public service – such as nurses, teachers, and
10 firefighters – would be denied the freedom to come together in strong unions that make our
11 communities safe, more equitable, and strong.

12 **WHEREAS**, the upcoming *Janus v. AFSCME* Supreme Court case will have a monumental
13 impact on our city residents.

14 **WHEREAS**, an unfavorable decision in this case would undermine the freedom for millions of
15 working people, especially women and communities of color, to join together in strong unions.

16 **WHEREAS**, Baltimore provides services to all of its residents because of the hard work of our
17 neighbors who work in the public service, providing health care, educating our children, putting
18 out fires, fixing our potholes, picking up our trash, and more.

19 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that the
20 Council supports the freedom of all City employees to exercise their rights to a voice and dignity
21 on the job through joining together in strong unions; and urges the Supreme Court to consider the
22 legacy of Dr. King, the Memphis sanitation workers, and the public benefit created by workers
23 organizing in rendering its decision in the upcoming *Janus v. AFSCME* case.

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