

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**  
**COUNCIL BILL 22-0091R**  
**(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers McCray, Ramos, Middleton, Bullock, Torrence

Introduced and read first time: February 22, 2022

Assigned to: Health, Environment, and Technology Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of Health, Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Fire Department, Baltimore City Sheriff's Office, Baltimore City Public School System, Department of Public Works, Office of Emergency Management, Department of Human Resources

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – The Effects of Post-Traumatic Stress**  
3 **Disorder on First Responders**

4 FOR the purpose of inviting the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Police Department, the  
5 Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Baltimore City Sheriff, the Chief of the  
6 Baltimore City School Police, the Director of the Office of Emergency Management, the  
7 Chief of the Baltimore City Environmental Police, and the Director of the Department of  
8 Human Resources to appear before the Baltimore City Council to discuss how post-traumatic  
9 stress symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), compassion fatigue, and burnout  
10 effect first responders and to inform the Council on intervention programs that are currently  
11 in place to provide City employees with relief from trauma and burnout.

12 **Recitals**

13 Emergency medical services personnel, firefighters, and police officers face unprecedented  
14 challenges in the line of duty. Exposure to drug overdoses, vehicle collisions, homicides,  
15 suicides, and violent crime can take an emotional toll on a first responder. Because emergency  
16 response personnel witness such a high number of serious injuries and deaths, Baltimore City  
17 needs to spotlight the mental health of its first responders. A staggering 88% of emergency  
18 workers have experienced at least 1 traumatic event while working, and 10 to 14% have been  
19 diagnosed with PTSD.

20 Some first responders do not have access to the resources they need to address traumatic  
21 events. Many emergency workers continue to witness the ills of society, dealing with trauma  
22 through dialogue with colleagues, who are often taxed themselves. While these conversations  
23 provide a helpful way for individuals to communicate about their experiences with a sympathetic  
24 peer, those who need help from a professional often do not have many options due to tight  
25 budgets and a lack of resources provided by their organizations. As a result, some individuals  
26 turn to negative ways to address trauma, including substance abuse and suicide.

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

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1 According to the Ruderman Family Foundation in a report on first responders and mental  
2 health, first responders are more likely to die from suicide than in the line of duty. PTSD and  
3 depression stemming from exposure to trauma were significant factors contributing to this high  
4 rate of suicide. One survey of first responders found that 6.6% had attempted suicide. While  
5 most mental health professionals believe suicide attempts by first responders are under reported  
6 due to stigma, this percentage is more than 10 times the rate of attempted suicides reported by the  
7 general population.

8 To prevent the worst outcomes associated with PTSD in first responders and to give our  
9 emergency professionals the support and resources they require, the City Council would like to  
10 be informed about the factors that lead to PTSD, the types of intervention programs that are  
11 already available or are able to be provided to employees witnessing trauma on the job, and the  
12 steps agencies are taking to alleviate employees' exposure to trauma, including rotating  
13 individuals in assignments where they are most like to experience continuous traumatic stress.

14 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
15 Baltimore City Council invites the Commissioner of the Baltimore City Police Department, the  
16 Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Baltimore City Sheriff, the Chief of the  
17 Baltimore City School Police, the Director of the Office of Emergency Management, the Chief of  
18 the Baltimore City Environmental Police, and the Director of the Department of Human  
19 Resources to appear before the Baltimore City Council to discuss how post-traumatic stress  
20 symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), compassion fatigue, and burnout effect first  
21 responders and to inform the Council on intervention programs that are currently in place to  
22 provide City employees with relief from trauma and burnout.

23 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Commissioner  
24 of the Baltimore City Police Department, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the  
25 Baltimore City Sheriff, the Chief of the Baltimore City School Police, the Director of the Office  
26 of Emergency Management, the Chief of the Baltimore City Environmental Police, the Director  
27 of the Department of Human Resources and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Baltimore  
28 City Council.