

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 08-0006R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Conaway, Branch, Welch, Young, Middleton, Spector,  
Reisinger, Holton  
Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2008  
Assigned to: Public Safety and Health Committee

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **A Request for State Legislation – To Prohibit the Possession and Use of**  
3 **Salvia Divinorum in Maryland**

4 FOR the purpose of requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate  
5 and House Delegations to the 2008 session of the Maryland General Assembly to introduce  
6 legislation to prohibit the possession and use of any form of Salvia divinorum in Maryland,  
7 urging the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committees to which the bills are assigned  
8 to pass the legislation, and entreating the Governor to sign the legislation into law.

9 **Recitals**

10 The National Institute on Drug Abuse reports that Salvia divinorum, popularly known as  
11 Salvia, is a herb common to southern Mexico and Central and South America in which the main  
12 active ingredient, salvinorin A, is a potent activator of kappa opiod receptors in the brain. These  
13 receptors differ from those activated by the more commonly known opioids, such as heroin and  
14 morphine.

15 Salvia divinorum has traditionally been ingested by chewing fresh leaves or by drinking their  
16 extracted juices. The dried leaves can also be smoked as a joint, consumed in water pipes, or  
17 vaporized and inhaled. Although not currently regulated by the Controlled Substances Act, the  
18 Drug Enforcement Agency has listed Salvia as a drug of concern and is considering classifying it  
19 as a Schedule I drug, like LSD or marijuana.

20 People who abuse Salvia generally experience hallucinations or delusional episodes that  
21 mimic psychosis. Effects include psychedelic-like changes in visual perceptions, mood, body  
22 sensations; emotional swings; feelings of detachment; and importantly, a highly modified  
23 perception of external reality and the self, which leads to a decreased ability to interact with  
24 one’s surroundings – prompting concerns about the dangers of driving under the influence of  
25 salvinorin.

26 The herb, sometimes called “Magic Mint”, “Ska Maria Pastora”, or “Sally D”, is widely  
27 available on the Internet and at some tobacco shops, head shops, and stores selling herbal  
28 remedies. Those concerned with its use say Salvia is being marketed and sold misleadingly as  
29 producing a high when, in reality, it induces an intense, dreamlike experience that can be  
30 unpleasant and frightening to first-time users.

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

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1 Several countries have enacted laws that prohibit the possession and/or sale of Salvia  
2 divinorum including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Spain, and Italy. In the United  
3 States, the following states have either passed or are currently considering legislation to prohibit  
4 its use: Alaska; California; Delaware; Iowa; Louisiana; Maine; Missouri; New Jersey; New  
5 York; North Dakota; Oklahoma; Oregon; Pennsylvania; Tennessee; Utah; and Wyoming. Most  
6 recently, on New Year's Day, in Illinois a law took effect making possession or sale of Salvia  
7 divinorum a felony.

8 Baltimore City has historically struggled with a substance abuse problem and associated  
9 social ills. According to Baltimore City Health Department statistics, in 2005, deaths due to  
10 drug intoxication reached there lowest point in 10 years. Deaths due to illicit substances peaked  
11 in 1999, with 328 deaths. Deaths decreased by 33.5% to 218 in 2005. Deaths decreased 11%,  
12 from 244 in 2004 to 218 in 2005.

13 Currently, Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems (bSAS), the designated substance abuse  
14 treatment and prevention authority for Baltimore City, oversees a network of 40 providers that  
15 treat 23,000 persons annually. Even so, there remains a substantial unmet need for drug  
16 treatment, and persons are often turned away for lack of treatment slots. To meet this demand  
17 and to reduce the costly health, crime, and social problems that addiction causes, bSAS  
18 calculates that an additional \$15 million a year is needed.

19 Although a significant problem with salvia divinorum has yet to surface in Baltimore City,  
20 banning the herb in Maryland would be a proactive step in preventing our already staggering  
21 drug abuse problem from encompassing yet another avenue to the destruction of personal lives  
22 and community well-being.

23 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this  
24 Body respectfully urges the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and  
25 House Delegations to the 2008 session of the Maryland General Assembly to introduce  
26 legislation to prohibit the possession and use of any form of Salvia divinorum in Maryland,  
27 requests the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Committees to which the bills are assigned to  
28 pass the legislation, and entreats the Governor to sign the legislation into law.

29 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
30 Governor, the Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the  
31 2008 Maryland General Assembly, the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of State  
32 Relations, the Baltimore City Commissioner of Health, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to  
33 the City Council.