

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 10-0237R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: President Young, Councilmembers Henry, Curran, Kraft, Stokes, Holton, Branch,
Middleton, Clarke, Conaway, Reisinger, Spector
Introduced and read first time: December 9, 2010
Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

Committee Report: Favorable
Adopted: February 28, 2011

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

**In Support of Proposed State Legislation – Restrictions Against
the Use and Possession of Firearms**

FOR the purpose of expressing support for Baltimore City Administration legislation that seeks to create a minimum sentence of 18 months and a maximum sentence of 10 years for persons who are arrested in the possession of illegal firearms and respectfully requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 session of the Maryland General Assembly to introduce and secure passage of the legislation entitled “Criminal Law – Restrictions Against the Use and Possession of Firearms”.

Recitals

On July 1, 2010, the Mayor and the Police Commissioner were joined by representatives of the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to report the outcome of recent gun suppression efforts and violent crime reduction in Baltimore City. For the first half of 2010, Baltimore had just under 100 homicides, the lowest tally in 25 years. In June 2010, the City recorded the lowest number of shootings on record ever for the month of June. Overall gun crime, including homicides, shootings, armed-robberies, and carjackings, was also down 16% compared to the previous year.

The Mayor and the Commissioner attributed the unprecedented reductions to enhanced police gun suppression efforts, effective relationships with federal law enforcement, and federal prosecution of gun cases as part of Project Exile. To date of the announcement, 1164 firearms were seized, and the Commissioner credited the intense, sustained pressure on gun offenders in a multifaceted enforcement regime to reduce gun violence, including target gun suppression efforts in areas with high rates of violence, identification, investigation, and prosecution of the most violent repeat offenders, and increased monitoring of gun offenders through implementation of Baltimore’s Gun Registry whereby more than 425 gun offenders in the are constantly monitored by members of the Gun Task Force.

Baltimore City’s approach to violent crime reduction is in keeping with efforts across the country to change the emphasis from drug related crime to gun control. Police across the country have put more resources into gun units, prioritized gun arrests, and have worked with federal prosecutors to take gun cases into federal court. City leaders have also joined the effort,

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

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1 creating *Mayors Against Illegal Guns*, an active group that grew from 15 mayors in April 2006,
2 to over 500 members, with the goal of uniting “the nation’s mayors around these common goals:
3 protecting their communities by holding gun offenders and irresponsible gun dealers
4 accountable; demanding access to trace data that is critical to law enforcement efforts to combat
5 illegal gun trafficking; and working with legislators to fix gaps, weaknesses, and loopholes in the
6 law that make it far too easy for criminals and other prohibited purchasers to get guns.”

7 Last year a similar proposal to amend State law to give local jurisdictions additional tools to
8 fight the war against illegal guns died in committee. Although Baltimore City has made gains in
9 addressing the symbiotic problems of violent crime and illegal gun possession, this virulent
10 situation persists – nearly one-half of the people arrested and convicted in Baltimore City for
11 violent crimes, such as murder and armed robbery, had previous convictions for handgun
12 offenses. The sentences they received for illegal gun possession obviously did not serve as a
13 deterrent. In many cases they were back on the streets in a matter of a few short weeks.

14 Increasing the penalties for illegal gun possession by making it a felony with serious
15 imprisonment will give Baltimore City a much needed weapon in our fight against violent crime.
16 We, like subdivisions across the country, rely on our esteemed legislators to provide this
17 invaluable resource.

18 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
19 Body supports Baltimore City Administration legislation that seeks to create a minimum
20 sentence of 18 months and a maximum sentence of 10 years for persons who are arrested in the
21 possession of illegal firearms and respectfully requests the Honorable Chairs and Members of
22 the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 session of the Maryland General
23 Assembly to introduce and secure passage of the legislation entitled “Criminal Law –
24 Restrictions Against the Use and Possession of Firearms”.

25 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the standing
26 Senate and House Committees to which the subject bill is assigned during the 2011 session of
27 the Maryland General Assembly.

28 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
29 Governor, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Senate Delegation to the
30 2011 Maryland General Assembly, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City
31 House Delegation to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly, the Baltimore Police Commissioner,
32 the Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of State Relations, the Director of the Mayor’s
33 Office on Criminal Justice, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.