

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 17-0154
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Costello, President Young, Councilmembers Scott, Henry,
Pinkett, Dorsey, Burnett, Middleton, Stokes, Sneed, Clarke, Reisinger, Bullock

Introduced and read first time: October 16, 2017

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Planning Commission, Department of
Real Estate, Department of General Services

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **City Property – Naming the Building, Informally Known as the**
3 **MECU Building, to be the Councilman Harry S. Cummings Building**

4 FOR the purpose of naming the building located at 401 East Fayette Street, informally known as
5 the MECU Building, the Councilman Harry S. Cummings Building.

6 BY authority of

7 Article 5 - Finance, Property, and Procurement

8 Section 20-2

9 Baltimore City Code

10 (Edition 2000)

11 **Recitals**

12 Harry Sythe Cummings, Baltimore’s first African-American Councilman, was
13 born in Baltimore’s Eleventh Ward, in 1866, and educated in Baltimore’s public
14 schools. In 1886, he graduated from Lincoln University, an institution of higher
15 learning that was then known as the “Black Princeton” because of its Princeton-
16 educated founder, its early faculty, and its rigorous classical curriculum. He then
17 graduated from the University of Maryland Law School, in 1889, one of the first
18 two African-Americans to do so.

19 His political career commenced in 1890, when he was elected to City Council
20 from the Ward in which he was born. At that time, each Councilman selected a
21 candidate for a full scholarship to the Maryland Institute. Harry Cummings
22 selected Harry S. Pratt, an African-American. Maryland Institute refused to honor
23 Pratt’s scholarship, and Cummings then prevailed in the courts on behalf of this
24 young man.

25 He was also known as the Father of Colored Polytechnic, for his efforts in
26 promoting the establishment of the high school.

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

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1 Although reelected in 1891, he lost in 1892, and was reelected in 1897. After that
2 term expired, he practiced law and was later elected to a 4-year term in 1907,
3 1911, and again in 1915. In an era of intense racial discrimination, he worked
4 hard on behalf of his constituents. It is fitting that a building be named to honor
5 his accomplishment as the first African-American member of the Baltimore City
6 Council.

7 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
8 building located at 401 East Fayette Street, informally known as the MECU Building, is named
9 the Councilman Harry S. Cummings Building.

10 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day
11 after the date it is enacted.