

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 05-0080R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Curran, Kraft, Young, Holton, Spector, Rawlings Blake,
Reisinger, Conaway, Clarke, Branch, Welch, Mitchell, D’Adamo, Harris, President Dixon
Introduced and read first time: August 15, 2005

Assigned to: Taxation and Finance Committee and Aging Subcommittee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Housing and Community Development,
Department of Finance, Commission on Aging and Retirement Education

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Foreclosing Tax Liens**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Baltimore City Finance Department,
4 HCD, and CARE brief the Council on the process by which tax liens are created and
5 enforced, which agency is responsible for notifying residents of the placement of tax liens on
6 their homes, and whether a better system for notification of citizens could be created.

7 **Recitals**

8 Currently in Baltimore City, there is a process for tax sales and foreclosures. The process
9 begins with the Department of Finance sending a final bill and legal notice to the person whose
10 name appears on the tax roll. Thirty days later, the pending tax sale is advertised in a local
11 newspaper twice, once per week in alternate weeks. After the tax sale occurs, a tax sale
12 certificate is issued to the purchaser, advising that proceedings to foreclose all rights of
13 redemption must be brought between 6 and 24 months after the date of tax sale. At this point,
14 the certificate holder must send written notice of proceedings to all defendants. The complaint
15 must be sent by certified mail, with return receipt requested.

16 As a courtesy, Finance sends letters in early April that provide the homeowner with a final
17 payment date by which to pay the lien and exclude the property from the pending tax sale, as
18 well as a letter in July advising that the lien was purchased at the tax sale.

19 Despite the efforts of Finance to let people know of their lien situation, many citizens are still
20 not being properly informed of the situation that they are in, or the options by which they could
21 avoid further losses. In addition, many of Baltimore’s elderly population need a better
22 notification system so that they can be properly informed. Letters are a good start, but many
23 times these letters are not received by the right person, or citizens may not fully understand the
24 information that the letter presents.

25 It is very important that citizens are given every opportunity to pay off their liens before the
26 property can be sold. When these citizens are well informed, many fewer instances of people
27 being forced from their homes due to tax sales will occur. No citizen of Baltimore should ever

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

1 be forced from their home, and if a new process of informing citizens will decrease the
2 occurrence of this situation, then most certainly a new plan should be created and put into effect.

3 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That this
4 Body requests that representatives from the Baltimore City Finance Department, HCD, and
5 CARE brief the Council on the process by which tax liens are created and enforced, which
6 agency is responsible for notifying residents of the placement of tax liens on their homes, and
7 whether a better system for notification of citizens could be created.

8 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
9 Director of Finance, HCD, CARE, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Council.