

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 07-0336R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Young, Holton, D'Adamo, Conaway, Middleton, Reisinger,
Kraft, Clarke, Harris, Spector, Welch, Mitchell, Curran

Introduced and read first time: October 15, 2007

Assigned to: Committee of the Whole

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Health Department, Department of Social Services

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – Homelessness in Baltimore City**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City Health Commissioner and the President of
4 Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc., to report to the City Council on the state of homelessness
5 in Baltimore City; the number, gender, and age of the homeless population; the array of
6 services needed by the homeless and the success of public and private service delivery
7 agencies in meeting these needs; transitional and permanent housing inventory currently
8 available to the homeless and plans to provide adequate and appropriate housing in future
9 years; and inter-agency, inter-governmental, and inter-jurisdictional immediate and far-
10 ranging plans to reverse the socio-economic factors that contribute to homelessness in
11 Baltimore City.

12 **Recitals**

13 The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness as
14 an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence including shelters or a
15 public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping
16 accommodation for human beings. A study published by the National Law Center on
17 Homelessness states that, in 2007, approximately 3.5 million people, 1.35 million of them
18 children, are likely to experience homelessness on any given year.

19 The National Coalition for the Homeless finds that, in the United States, people remain
20 homeless an average of 8 months. Officials estimate that, on average, single men comprise 51 %
21 of the homeless population, families with children 30 %, single women 17% and unaccompanied
22 youth 2%. The homeless population is estimated to be 42% African-American, 39% white, 13%
23 Hispanic, 4% Native American, and 2% Asian. An average of 16% of homeless people are
24 considered mentally ill; 26% are substance abusers. Thirteen percent are employed. Requests
25 for assisted housing by low-income families and individuals increased in 86% of the cities
26 during the last year.

27 In Baltimore City, the picture of homelessness appears to have changed very little since the
28 first census of homelessness was taken in 2003. The results of that census, organized by the
29 Department of Housing and Community Development and funded by the Maryland Veteran's
30 Association, the State, and Associated Black Charities, found that between 2,200 and 2,500
31 people were living on the streets and in emergency shelters. However, officials of St. Vincent

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

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1 de Paul of Baltimore, a charity that has provided services to the poor and homeless for more than
2 50 years, held that the 2003 census showed that there was a more than 100% increase in the
3 number of homeless since the early 1990s. They estimated that on any given night more than
4 3,000 persons were homeless in a city that had only 772 shelter beds available.

5 Baltimore City 2005 Census: The Picture of Homelessness, May 2005, a homeless census
6 completed by Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc., the Center for Poverty Solutions, and other
7 service providers, counted 2,943 individuals who were homeless in Baltimore City. The 2007
8 Baltimore City Homeless Census, found that there were, at a minimum, an estimated 3,002
9 homeless individuals in Baltimore City on January 26, 2007. The survey found that the
10 homeless were more likely than not to be African American males; 11% were younger than 18;
11 more than half were without a home for more than 1 year; health and housing concerns are the
12 primary reasons for homelessness; the primary need is housing; and the number of homeless did
13 not change appreciably between 2005 and 2007.

14 As stated in the Executive Summary of the 2007 Census – “the results show that despite
15 economic progress in the city of Baltimore, homelessness remains a serious and persistent
16 problem, with the increase in chronic homelessness especially concerning.” Baltimore Homeless
17 Services, Inc., was created to address the problems that contribute to homelessness and to make
18 homelessness a rare and brief experience in Baltimore City by facilitating the delivery of high-
19 quality, evidence-based services and community-wide advocacy.

20 The City Council and the citizens of Baltimore are appalled at the inhumanity of
21 homelessness and request an update on the effectiveness of efforts of public and private service
22 organizations to combat its prevalence in our midst. None among us can enjoy the blessings of
23 our great City when so many of our brothers and sisters exist each day agonizing through the
24 pangs of real hunger and bereft of the comforts of a “forever” home.

25 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the
26 Baltimore City Health Commissioner and the President of Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc.,
27 are requested to report to the City Council on the state of homelessness in Baltimore City; the
28 number, gender, and age of the homeless population; the array of services needed by the
29 homeless and the success of public and private service delivery agencies in meeting these needs;
30 transitional and permanent housing inventory currently available to the homeless and plans to
31 provide adequate and appropriate housing in future years; and inter-agency, inter-governmental,
32 and inter-jurisdictional immediate and far-ranging plans to reverse the socio-economic factors
33 that contribute to homelessness in Baltimore City.

34 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
35 Commissioner of Health, the President of Baltimore Homeless Services, Inc., the Executive
36 Director of St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore, the Executive Director of the ACLU of Maryland,
37 the President of Healthcare for the Homeless, the President of the Tenant’s Association of the
38 HABC, the President of Associated Catholic Charities, the Director of BCDSS Homeless
39 Services Unit, the Executive Director of the Homeless Person’s Representation Project, and the
40 Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.