

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 21-0069R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Burnett, McCray, Dorsey, Porter, Cohen, Ramos, Stokes,
Torrence, President Mosby, Councilmember Conway

Introduced and read first time: October 4, 2021

Assigned to: Health, Environment, and Technology Committee

Committee Report: Favorable

Adopted:

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

Investigative Hearing – Well-being of the Transgender Community in Baltimore

FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Mayor’s Office, the Health Department, the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services, the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Baltimore City State’s Attorney’s Office, the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health System Baltimore, and other relevant stakeholders to update the Council on services provided to and the general well-being of the transgender community in Baltimore City.

Recitals

Anti-transgender stigma, transphobia, and the dehumanization of transgender individuals is prevalent in the media, politics and public policy. According to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s (HRCF) 2018 report *Dismantling a Culture of Violence: Understanding Anti-Transgender Violence and Ending the Crisis*, transgender and gender-expansive people face stigma surrounding who they are from an early age. Often rooted in inaccurate beliefs and politically-motivated attacks on transgender identities, this stigma erects barriers in virtually every facet of life, denying transgender people the equal opportunity to succeed and be accepted for who they are. In a Baltimore-based Be the Conversation (“BTC”) study, transgender and non-binary Baltimoreans view stigma and transphobia as a leading contributor to their violence experiences. This stigma and lack of general knowledge and acceptance has a profound impact on the health, well-being, and safety of transgender individuals.

According to the HRCF, in May, there were 17 anti-LGBTQ laws enacted in the United States, making 2021 the worst year for anti-LGBTQ laws in recent history. Removing existing civil rights protections increases the possibility of attack and greater discrimination towards transgender individuals. Existing discrimination is found in unequal barriers to education, economic development, housing, health care, and the justice system.

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

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1 In a report by GLSEN, the nation's leading education non-profit addressing LGBTQ issues in
2 K-12 schools, over half of transgender students (54%) have been denied access to restrooms that
3 are consistent with their gender and nearly half of transgender students (48%) have been
4 prevented from using their chosen name. In addition, the HRCF report indicates that 84% of
5 transgender youth do not feel safe in the classroom.

6 Extensive barriers to health care exist for the transgender community. Finding medical
7 professionals that respect and affirm their identities as well as insurance that covers medically
8 necessary procedures are on-going challenges. Transgender individuals report being denied care
9 simply because of their gender identity. In the Leading Innovation for Transgender Women's
10 Health and Empowerment ("LITE") study, individuals cited safety in transit as a barrier to
11 accessing healthcare. Transphobia also leads to adverse mental health, including suicidality and
12 PTSD. Other barriers faced include unstable housing, increased rates of homelessness and
13 employment discrimination.

14 Transgender individuals suffer from an increased rate of violence. In the Supporting
15 Transgender Research and Opportunities in the Baltimore Environment ("STROBE") study, 75%
16 of participants had experience physical violence in their lifetime and HRCF found that there was
17 a 43% increase in anti-LGBTQ hate groups in 2019. Violence is highly prevalent for local
18 transgender women of color, especially violence perpetrated by strangers and intimate partner
19 violence. Specifically, in Baltimore, police violence and harassment are among the concerns that
20 face the transgender community.

21 Black transgender women in Baltimore suffer from the added impacts of racism and sexism,
22 compounding the discrimination they face. Given the added obstacles they face, Black
23 transgender women are especially vulnerable, with many dealing with poverty, homelessness,
24 intimate partner violence, sexual assault, survival sex work, addiction, HIV and other STIs, and
25 general violence. There is an epidemic of violence against Black transgender women, with at
26 least 10 Black transgender women having been killed in Baltimore City since 2012.

27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
28 Council invites representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Health Department, the Baltimore
29 Police Department, Baltimore City Public Schools, the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the
30 Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Baltimore City Office of Equity and Civil
31 Rights, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, the Baltimore City Department of Social
32 Services, the Maryland Department of Health, Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore, and other
33 relevant stakeholders to update the Council on services provided to and the general well-being of
34 the transgender community in Baltimore.

35 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
36 Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the Baltimore Police Commissioner, the CEO of
37 Baltimore City Public Schools, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the
38 Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the Director of the Baltimore City
39 Office of Equity and Civil Rights, the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Director of the
40 Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department
41 of Health, the President and CEO of Behavioral Health System Baltimore, the Mayor's LGBTQ
42 Affairs Liaison, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.