

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 24-0597
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Costello, President Mosby, and Councilmembers Stokes,
Bullock, Schleifer, Conway, Dorsey, Burnett, Ramos, Porter, Glover, Cohen, and Torrence
Introduced and read first time: September 30, 2024
Assigned to: Ways and Means Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Department of
Planning, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, Baltimore Development Corporation,
Department of Transportation, Department of Real Estate

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **City Property – Renaming Riverside Park Pool**
3 **to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool**

4 FOR the purpose of changing the name of Riverside Park Pool, located at 1800 Covington Street
5 (Block 1940, Lot 001), to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool.

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 Elijah E. Cummings, the longtime United States Representative for much of Baltimore City,
13 grew up in Sharp-Leadenhall in South Baltimore. As a child, Cummings would join other youths
14 playing in the wading pool at the Sharp Street Community Center. The small pool was not
15 sufficient for the community it was serving. One day in 1962 the center’s recreation leader, Jim
16 Smith, gathered up some two dozen Black youth including Cummings and walked down to
17 Riverside Park Pool.

18 In the wake of 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education*, both Maryland Governor Theodore
19 McKeldin and Baltimore City Mayor Tommy D’Alessandro issued executive orders integrating
20 public facilities, but in practice, the Riverside Park Pool was whites only. As the Sharp Street
21 swimmers used Riverside Park’s pool over several days, as many as 1,000 white protestors
22 flooded the area, hurling insults, rocks, and bottles. One of those bottles hit the young Elijah,
23 resulting in a scar he would carry with him for the rest of his life. Other Black youth were also
24 injured during these visits, as was Juanita Jackson Mitchell, a lawyer with the NAACP who was
25 the first Black woman to practice law in the state of Maryland. Mitchell and the NAACP sought
26 a blue ribbon commission to investigate the series of incidents, which was refused by then-
27 Governor John Millard Tawes.

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

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1 The Baltimore City Council seeks to honor the dedicated service of Cummings, as well as
2 his, Mitchell's, and the other community member's participation in the integration of the
3 Riverside Park Pool. By renaming the pool for Congressman Cummings, we recognize the event
4 as part of the larger Civil Rights Movement and Maryland's role in it. The integration of the
5 pool stands alongside the 1960 Morgan State College student sit-ins at Baltimore department
6 stores, the Congress of Racial Equality and Freedom Rider sit-ins of 1961, the 1962 Student
7 Nonviolent Coordinating Committee demonstrations on the Eastern Shore, and Martin Luther
8 King Jr.'s famous "I Have A Dream" speech delivered in August 1963, a year after the scenes at
9 Riverside Park. The City of Baltimore and its longtime champion Elijah E. Cummings are
10 essential elements of the Civil Rights Movement.

11 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
12 name of Riverside Park Pool, located at 1800 Covington Street (Block 1940, Lot 001), is
13 changed to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool.

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