

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 16-0288R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Spector, Reisinger, Costello, Middleton, Curran, Henry,
President Young, Councilmembers Kraft, Stokes, Holton, Welch, Clarke, Scott

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2016

Assigned to: Budget and Appropriations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Finance, Department of Transportation,
Baltimore City Public School System

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Traffic Camera Revenue for Crossing Guards**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on the Administration to act to improve the safety of Baltimore's
4 schoolchildren by dedicating funds from the planned redeployment of speed and red light
5 cameras by the City to increasing the number of crossing guards working to protect our
6 children.

7 **Recitals**

8 Crossing guards are our children's first – and often only – line of defense against the dangers
9 they may encounter moving between the safer and more controlled environments of school and
10 home. Unfortunately, at current funding levels, there simply are not enough of them to provide
11 all of the protection that parents need and deserve for their children.

12 Currently, there are just barely enough of the Department of Transportation's crossing guards
13 to cover the most dangerous traffic threats to schoolchildren. There are not adequate funds to
14 hire backup personnel for even these intersections – if regular guards are sick or otherwise
15 absent, their posts go unmanned, putting our children at risk where they were expecting aid and
16 protection.

17 Beyond these intermittent and unpredictable shortcomings, the sad, but all too regular and
18 predictable everyday reality for too many of Baltimore's students is that it is not just traffic that
19 poses a threat coming to and from school. Many elementary and middle school students must
20 walk through open-air drug markets or other crime ridden areas to reach their classes. These
21 children crossing corners where the risk comes from something other than just traffic could
22 benefit from the security of passing under the watchful eye of a crossing guard just as much as
23 those with only cars and trucks to be concerned about. But there are too few guards to watch
24 over them everywhere that they should.

25 Troublingly, planned realignments of both the school system and the MTA-run bus system
26 appear likely to stretch crossing guards even thinner in the near future. The closure and
27 consolidation of some neighborhood schools as part of the school system's modernization plans
28 will force some students to walk further to reach new locations; as will the planned reduction in
29 the number of bus stops and routes as part of the Governor's transit proposals for Baltimore.

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

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1 Longer walks will mean more dangerous spots where young children need assistance from
2 crossing guards, but there are simply not any spare guards available today to fill out these new
3 posts.

4 In order to keep our children safe today, and in the future, more crossing guards are
5 desperately needed. And more funding must be found to provide them.

6 A natural source for this funding would be the City's reinstated speed and red light camera
7 program. These cameras have long been touted as primarily traffic safety devices – devices
8 particularly concerned with protecting schoolchildren – rather than mere revenue traps.
9 Dedicating money from the fines they generate to funding more crossing guards would make
10 them doubly effective in this role while helping to reassure residents that the cameras aren't
11 being used simply to underwrite the City's general fund.

12 Dedicating traffic camera revenue to funding crossing guards is an ideal solution to the very
13 real problem of current and future crossing guard shortages that imperils our children. It should
14 be adopted as part of the RFP and approval process for Baltimore's next red light and speed
15 camera program that is currently underway.

16 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
17 Council calls on the Administration to act to improve the safety of Baltimore's schoolchildren by
18 dedicating funds from the planned redeployment of speed and red light cameras by the City to
19 increasing the number of crossing guards working to protect our children.

20 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
21 Director of Finance, the Director of Transportation, the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools,
22 and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to City Council.