

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 17-0040R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes, President Young, Councilmembers Henry, Scott, Dorsey,
Burnett, Bullock, Cohen, Middleton, Costello, Pinkett, Sneed, Clarke, Schleifer, Reisinger

Introduced and read first time: August 14, 2017

Assigned to: Judiciary and Legislative Investigations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Department

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Increased Transparency About Police-Seized Property**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting that the Police Department provide the City Council with a full
4 accounting of all seized guns, drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years, along with a
5 thorough explanation of how this material was disposed of, how long the disposal process
6 typically takes, and what the best ways to include community representatives in that process
7 may be.

8 **Recitals**

9 Recent events have highlighted the importance of restoring the trust of all communities in
10 Baltimore's Police Department. Implementation of the consent decree between the Department
11 and the U.S. Department of Justice is expected to bring forward many tangible reforms to
12 improve relations between the public and the police. However, it is important to take whatever
13 confidence building steps can be independently identified in the meantime as well.

14 One such idea that has been raised in the past would be requiring civilian monitoring of
15 police disposition of seized property and contraband. While there's nothing to suggest that the
16 Police Department routinely mishandles this property, skepticism amongst some segments of the
17 public about police claims regarding the destruction of guns, drugs, dirt bikes and other
18 contraband has sometimes been a source of friction.

19 Involving civilian witnesses in the Police Department's property disposition process would
20 be a simple and effective way to eliminate this friction while improving police openness and
21 transparency. These witnesses could put to rest any concerns about police destruction of
22 contraband, and their presence would not require any significant change in police practices.

23 In the meantime, it is important that the public be given more insight into the current
24 processes for disposing of police-seized contraband. The Council should receive a full
25 accounting of all seized guns, drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years along with a
26 thorough explanation of how this material was disposed of, how long the disposal process
27 typically takes, and what the best ways to include community representatives in that process may
28 be.

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

Council Bill 17-0040R

1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
2 Council requests that the Police Department provide it with a full accounting of all seized guns,
3 drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years, along with a thorough explanation of how this
4 material was disposed of, how long the disposal process typically takes, and what the best ways
5 to include community representatives in that process may be.

6 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
7 Police Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.