



Legislation Text

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File #: 12-0073R, Version: 0

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INTRODUCTORY\*

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL        R  
(Resolution)

Introduced by: President Young

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning  
**Request for State Action - Calling for a Moratorium on the Construction of New Juvenile Detention Facilities**

FOR the purpose of requesting that State leaders take every effort to prohibit the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services from planning or constructing a certain detention facility in Baltimore City; that they prohibit the planning or construction of any detention facility for juveniles in Baltimore City until a task force has conducted a study on implementing certain recommendations; calling upon the General Assembly to redirect all State funding that would have been used to construct or operate a certain facility to recreational and educational programs which have been shown to actually reduce juvenile involvement with crime; and generally relating to detention facilities in Baltimore City.

Recitals

Governor O'Malley has recently decided to move forward with the misguided plan to spend more than \$70 million building a youth detention facility in Baltimore City despite the fact that there are sound arguments against building this facility. In fact, using the governor's commissioned report researched and written by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, youth advocates have documented why the decision to focus valuable resources on locking up our youth instead of investing in their intellectual and social development is faulty.

Among the report's findings are:

- Juvenile arrests have fallen during the past six years, and experts predict that this number will continue to decline.
- Alternatives to detention cost far less and produce better results. For example, "evening reporting centers" cost \$44 per day compared to the exorbitant \$462 a day for detention.
- The alternatives free up existing jail space, providing ample room for those youths who need to be detained.

· The costs to build and operate a youth jail would be better spent on expanding basic development activities, such as recreation, sports, arts and improvements to our schools.

Nationally, states are reexamining their treatment of youth offenders. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, many states are choosing rehabilitation over the tough-on-crime attitude that came in vogue during a rise in juvenile crime in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Maryland should be following that trend. Our children deserve our attention and care. Instead of looking at ways to lock up our children, we should be utilizing every resource available to develop programs that ensure an inspired future for our youth.

We have the ability to divert attention and our precious financial resources to efforts that grow our children's minds, hearts, and skills instead of growing more jails. Numerous studies have linked improved access to recreation opportunities to decreases in both overall crime and juvenile victimization rates. No similar benefits could be derived from the construction of an unneeded jail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council requests that the State act to address public safety concerns involving City youth in a more effective and fiscally responsible way by redirecting funds earmarked for a new youth jail towards City recreation centers instead.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the Maryland General Assembly, the President of the Maryland Senate, the Maryland House Speaker, the Mayor, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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