



Legislation Text

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Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: President Young

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Potential Negative Impacts of the Proposed Federal Budget on Baltimore City

For the purpose of condemning the inequitable and shortsighted proposed federal budget, calling on the Maryland delegation to the 115th United States Congress to oppose the current budget proposals, and requesting that representatives from the City agencies most likely to be negatively impacted by proposed federal budget cuts appear before the City Council to discuss how the cuts might impact their work with the citizens of Baltimore and what mitigating steps can be, and are being, taken to continue vital services threatened by the current federal administration

Recitals

Reports about the current Federal administration's proposed budget show that it falls well short of any effort to support our shared priorities. The proposal cuts billions in funding for critical safety net programs, life-saving health initiatives, and scientific research needed to keep our nation competitive, but manages to fund a \$2.6 billion increase for "border security", including the infamous border wall.

These cuts would harm millions of Americans nationwide, and they could have immediate and severe impacts here at home in Baltimore as well. Our City expects to receive nearly \$172 million in federal grants in fiscal year 2018. This includes roughly \$22.6 million in support for public safety efforts, \$40 million for the Mayor's Office of Human Services - nearly two-thirds of the budget for a City agency directly tasked with assisting the most vulnerable Baltimoreans - and \$73.7 million from the Health Department. State, private, and non-profit partners also expect to make use of millions of dollars in Federal spending in Baltimore over the next year. Any reduction in this funding could greatly harm our city.

The work of the Health Department in particular would be grievously undermined by the proposed cuts. According to Health Commissioner Dr. Leana Wen the proposal "cuts life-saving services and will harm the health and well-being of hundreds of thousands of Baltimoreans... The proposed federal cuts will have devastating consequences for Baltimoreans, resulting in worse health that will affect generations of our residents". The program that provides 187,000 meals to Baltimore seniors could be jeopardized, as could insurance for 80,000 Baltimore children and as many as half of Baltimore's 9,000 pregnant women each year.

Cuts to programs designed to assist those with substance abuse and mental health disorders could be especially harmful to both public health and safety. As Dr. Wen stated when the proposed cuts were announced:

Even though the administration is touting increases in spending to treat opioid use disorders, the proposed budget slashes funding for substance abuse prevention efforts and the Community Mental Health Services Block Grants, a cut that targets the 70,000 Baltimore residents who receive publicly-funded services for substance use disorders and mental health needs. Cuts to Medicaid would affect the 1 in 3 Marylanders who depend on Medicaid for treatment of addiction. Those who depend on private insurance could also lose coverage, because the repeal of the Affordable Care Act could result in the removal of treatment for substance use and mental health disorders as essential health benefits. At a time of a public health emergency around opioids, with unprecedented numbers of Marylanders dying from overdose, this proposal could deprive millions of the care that they need.

The full impact of the proposed budget is not yet clear, and it is likely that the final approved budget will differ somewhat from the current proposal. We strongly urge the Maryland Congressional delegation to work to reverse these inequitable and shortsighted cuts. But, at the same time, in order to fully assess and prepare for the effects of whatever cuts do occur, it is important to have frank discussions about their possible impacts on the citizens of Baltimore and how those impacts could best be mitigated.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council condemns the inequitable and shortsighted proposed federal budget, calls on the Maryland delegation to the 115th United States Congress to oppose the current budget proposals, and requests that representatives from the City agencies most likely to be negatively impacted by proposed federal budget cuts appear before it to discuss how the cuts might impact their work with the citizens of Baltimore and what mitigating steps can be, and are being, taken to continue vital services threatened by the current federal administration.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Honorable Members of the Maryland Delegation to the 115th United States Congress, Health Commissioner, the Police Commissioner, the Acting Housing Commissioner, the head of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Human Services, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.