



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Branch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Request for State Legislation - Sex Offenders - Prohibition Against Living Near Locations Where Children Congregate

FOR the purpose of respectfully requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly to sponsor legislation to prohibit registered sex offenders from residing within 2,000 feet of a school, child care facility, or location where children congregate.

Recitals

According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, prior to 1994, few states required sex offenders to register their addresses with local law enforcement. As recognition of the severity of this problem grew, Congress passed the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Act, requiring state implementation of a sex offender registration program or a 10% forfeiture of federal funds for state and local law enforcement under the Byrne Grant Program of the U.S. Department of Justice.

There are currently more than ½ million registered sex offenders in the United States. In Baltimore City, the Maryland State Police officials at the Department of Public Safety and Correction's Sexual Offender Registry Unit reported the number to be 1264, in October 2008. These persons pose an enormous challenge for policy makers: they evoke unparalleled fear among constituents, their offenses are associated with a great risk of psychological harm, and most of their victims are children and youth.

The Center holds that as policy makers address the issue of sex offenders they are confronted with some basic realities:

- Most sex offenders are not in prison, and those who are tend to serve limited sentences;
- Most sex offenders are largely unknown to people in the community;
- Sex offenders have a high risk of re-offending; and

· While community supervision and oversight is widely recognized as essential, the system for providing such supervision is overwhelmed.

Given the propensity of sex offenders to re-offend and the inability of the system to provide proper and consistent supervision, it is important that the law strictly prohibit their interaction with children. Currently, Maryland state law prohibits registrants from entering public or nonpublic elementary or secondary schools, family day care homes, child care homes, or child care institutions. Strengthening the prohibition to provide that a registered sex offender may not reside within 2,000 feet of such facilities would go much further to protect the children of Maryland.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly are respectfully requested to sponsor legislation to prohibit registered sex offenders from residing within 2,000 feet of a school, child care facility, or location where children congregate.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the Governor, the Mayor, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of State Relations, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the General Assembly.

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