



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Young

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Request for State Legislation - Gun Crimes - Increase in Penalty

FOR the purpose of requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2009 Maryland General Assembly to introduce legislation to increase the penalty for all felony gun crimes to a sentence of not more than 20 years imprisonment.

Recitals

Testimony of Baltimore City officials to Committees of the 2008 Maryland General Assembly, which introduced the Baltimore City Administration's legislative agenda "cracking down on gun offenders and illegal guns", states that "Baltimore City's GunStat initiative, which convenes city, state, and federal law enforcement, prosecution, and probation partners to prioritize and track felony gun offenders, has identified that individuals charged with gun felonies are likely to have prior gun arrests, are out on bail, or are on parole and probation."

In January 2008, The Abell Report found that on an average, Baltimore City police seize or recover close to 10 guns a day. From January 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007, the Department used the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives (AFT) to trace the origin of 3,131 firearms - 1,990 of which were traceable. Of these, 1,533 were first sold more than 3 years prior to trace; 347 were less than 3 years old and therefore considered "new" crime guns; and 47% of the people who possessed the seized guns were under the age of 25.

The AFT ranks Maryland near the top of its list for gun trafficking. According to the report, more than 7,000 guns recovered by law enforcement have been traced to Maryland, and as many as 3,500 of those guns came from Baltimore City. Statistics provided by Baltimore City police indicated that 42% of defendants charged with felony gun crimes have prior gun arrests and that more than 50% of suspects arrested on murder charges have prior gun convictions.

Efforts of the Mayor, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, and the Baltimore Police Department, in concert with federal, state, and local partners to reduce violent crime in Baltimore City by focusing on gun crimes, seems to have been successful. As of this month, the City's murder rate is down 30% from last year - 162 compared with 231. September's 19 homicides - 3 less than last year - are the lowest number of murders for the month since 2003.

In commenting on the most recent statistics, the Baltimore Police Commissioner noted that one of the challenges moving forward is what is to be done in the future. And in presenting the Administration's crime fighting package last session, officials noted that keeping the recidivist gun offenders off the street will prevent future crimes of violence. Increasing the penalty for all felony gun offenses to a possible 20 years will definitely serve that very purpose.

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 Maryland General Assembly are requested to introduce legislation to increase the penalty for all felony gun crimes to a sentence of not more than 20 years imprisonment.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Baltimore City State's Attorney, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2009 Maryland General Assembly, the Baltimore Police Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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