



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 Scott

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Giving Youth a Voice in Community Decisions

FOR the purpose of calling on all neighborhood community associations to make a greater effort to involve young people in their discussions by including at least one youth representative on their executive boards.

Recitals

Baltimore's many community associations play an important role in organizing neighborhoods and providing a forum where residents can reach a consensus on the issues most relevant to their part of the city. Input from these associations is extremely important to officials throughout City government who must make decisions that will impact neighborhoods for years to come.

Community associations are most successful when they reflect the entirety of their neighborhoods in all their diversity and give everyone a voice. And yet, many community associations have no formal way for young people to participate in their discussions. In fact, many associations specifically exclude minors from membership in their bylaws and make no effort to offer an alternative way for them to be heard.

The absence of youth voices in community association deliberations is especially troubling because many times these associations are tasked with debating issues that will specifically impact young people. Even when a discussion doesn't touch on youth-specific issues, decisions about long term priorities could benefit from the perspective of those young residents who will be living with the results of a decision the longest.

At the City level, government has recognized the importance of giving youth an opportunity to weigh in on the issues most important to them by establishing the Baltimore City Youth Commission. Neighborhoods could benefit from this example by making a greater effort to involve their young people in the critical decisions facing their immediate communities. At the very least, all neighborhood community associations should include one youth on their executive board to ensure that young people's perspectives are represented.

Baltimore's young people are far too important to our city's future to be left voiceless. In the long run they will inherit the results, good and bad, of the decisions made today, and they deserve a role in making those decisions. We must always be preparing and nurturing our next generation of leaders. More than that, many may be surprised by what young people can accomplish today when, rather than being told to wait their turn while their elders make decisions for them without their input, they are engaged and given the chance to focus the energy of youth on the problems in their communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on all neighborhood community associations to make a greater effort to involve young people in their discussions by including at least one youth representative on their executive boards.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Chair of the Baltimore City Youth Commission, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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