



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Middleton

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Baltimore City Council Complete Count Coordination

FOR the purpose of exploring how the Baltimore City Council can best assist the Administration in securing an accurate population count in the 2010 Census, determining Council district organization, and identifying focus groups.

Recitals

The Leadership Conference of Civil Rights, the nation's oldest and largest civil rights coalition, founded in 1950, reports that despite more resources and better planning, the 2000 census missed more than 3 million people. Low-income communities, particularly low-income communities of color, were disproportionately undercounted in the census. As a result, many individuals were denied an equal voice in their government (since legislative districts are drawn based on decennial census data), and many communities were shortchanged on federal and state funding for schools, crime prevention, health care, and transportation.

The Conference found that there are several reasons for the persistent and disproportionate undercount of people of color and low-income people, including:

- lower response rates for mail and door-to-door collection methods in lower-income areas;
- lower education levels, illiteracy, and difficulty with the English language, affecting the ability of many individuals to understand the census;
- a general misunderstanding of the importance of census participation in these communities; and
- a distrust or suspicion of government, leading to a fear that census responses may be used by immigration or law enforcement officials to deport or incarcerate or may disqualify one for social welfare programs.

Low-income people, people of color, children, immigrants, people with disabilities, and people living in urban areas are most likely to be undercounted. In contrast, college students living away from home, people who own

more than one home, non-Hispanic whites, suburban residents, and higher-income people are more likely to be counted twice, leading to an over counting of these populations. An accurate census directly affects our nation's ability to ensure equal representation and equal access to important government resources for all Americans and thus must be regarded as one of the most significant civil rights issues facing the country today.

Statistics from the Baltimore City Health Status Report 2008 show that population trends in Baltimore City put the City in danger of being undercounted, once again:

- Nearly two-thirds of City residents are African American, and nearly one third are white;
- Over the past decade and a half, the proportion of black Baltimore City residents has increased by 8%, and the proportion of white residents has decreased by 17%;
- While the classification of Asian race changed from the 1990 to the 2000 census, the proportion of Asian Baltimore City residents has increased by at least 90%; and
- Comparing 1990 to 2007, the proportion of the population who were of Hispanic ethnicity has more than doubled - comprising 1% of the population in 1990 and 2.5% in 2007.

According to recently released Census Bureau estimates, Baltimore's population decreased by 3,506 people during the year that ended July 1, 2007 to 637,455, a number that City officials plan to challenge, as in the past several years. The initial 2006 estimate was 631,366, the adjusted estimate after appeal is 640,961 - although, the market analysis group, Social Compact, estimates Baltimore's population at 663,717, or about 23,000 more people than the Census reported.

To ensure an accurate count in 2010, the Administration is implementing a Complete Count Committee comprising all City agencies and made up of subcommittees: Faith-Based; Education; Disabilities and Special Needs; Elderly; Immigration and Limited English Proficiency; New Baltimoreans; Nonprofit & Community-Based Organizations; Public Housing; Group Quarters; Media; Business; and Homeless.

Officials from the Department of Planning that staff the Committee welcome interaction with the City Council because of the extensive knowledge members have of their home districts and their constituencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Baltimore City Council will explore how to best assist the Administration in securing an accurate population count in the 2010 Census by determining Council district organization, and identifying focus groups.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director, Department of Planning, the Chair of the Complete Count Committee, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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