



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 Welch

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
**In Support of State Legislation - Senate Bill 437/House Bill 1311 - State
Designations - Walking as the State Exercise**

FOR the purpose of expressing support for this legislation that designates, beginning October 2008, walking as the State exercise; urging the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Honorable Chair and Members of the House Health and Governmental Operations Committee, respectively, to give Senate Bill 437 and House Bill 1311 a favorable report; requesting the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2008 Maryland General Assembly to support the bills; and petitioning the Governor to sign the legislation into law.

Recitals

The Preamble to this legislation states, in part, that heart disease is the number 1 cause of death each year in Maryland, that mortality rates from coronary artery disease in Maryland rank in the top 1/3rd in the nation, and that Maryland ranks in the top 50% of the heaviest states in the nation with an adult obesity rate of 23.4%.

It is also reported that health care costs related to cardiovascular disease in Maryland are \$2.25 billion yearly; the annual cost of heaviness and obesity in the United States is \$122.9 billion, with \$64.1 billion in direct costs and \$58.8 billion in indirect costs. In addition, more than 300,000 Maryland residents have been diagnosed with diabetes, while an additional estimated 1/3rd of the population remains undiagnosed.

In the Report of the Baltimore City Council Task Force on Childhood Obesity, the Baltimore City Council reported that due to the demographic characteristics of Baltimore City, the prevalence of overweight and obesity are undoubtedly higher than the national figures that show that, from 1980 to 2004, the prevalence of overweight among American children aged 6 to 11 more than doubled, and for adolescents it more than tripled.

The Task Force found that obesity brings with it a host of co-morbidities that are expensive in human terms and in medical costs:

* Overweight young people face a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults, placing them at high risk of heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.

* 61% of overweight young people have at least one additional risk factor for heart disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

* Children who are overweight are at greater risk for orthopedic problems, sleep apnea, and psychological problems such as stigmatization and low self-esteem.

* Excess weight is suspected as a fact in the early onset of puberty, which in turn, is linked to greatly increased risk of breast cancer.

The recommendations contained in the Baltimore City Council Childhood Obesity Task Force include Physical Activity Recommendations:

* Improve the walkability of neighborhoods.

* Improve access and the availability of public transportation.

* Improve the access and condition of neighborhood parks and recreational facilities, and assess their operations.

* Promote physical activity through schools, communities, and recreation centers by involving parent-teacher associations, student government, and neighborhood associations.

* Enact policies that will support increased physical activity in Baltimore City.

Prevalence of Overweight among Baltimore City Schoolchildren and its Associations with Nutrition and Physical Activity, a study by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health published in 2006 by the North American Association for the Study of Obesity, indicated that, based on the International Obesity Taskforce reference values for BMI-for-age, 20.7% of girls and 17.2% of boys were overweight, and 15.3% of girls and 14.1% of boys were at-risk-for-overweight.

Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it is readily available to everyone, utilizes no special equipment, and has been found to reduce cholesterol, improve cardiovascular fitness, improve blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart attack and prevent colon cancer, breast cancer, osteoporosis, and diabetes. Designating walking as the State exercise will highlight the importance of this activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and preventing disabling disease.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body supports this legislation that designates, beginning October 2008, walking as the State exercise; urges the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Honorable Chair and Members of the House Health and Governmental Operations Committee, respectively, to give Senate Bill 437 and House Bill 1311 a favorable report; requests the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2008 Maryland General Assembly to support the bills; and petitions the Governor to sign the legislation into law.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs and the House Health and Governmental Operations Committee are requested to consider this position in their deliberations on the bill and include the comments as part of the official bill file.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Mayor, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, the Honorable Chair and Members of the House Health and Governmental Operations Committee, the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2008 Maryland General Assembly, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the Members of the Baltimore City Council Task Force on Childhood Obesity, the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of State Relations, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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