



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke and Curran

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Investigative Hearing - April 2016 Election Problems

FOR the purpose of reviewing with the Maryland State and Baltimore City Boards of Elections the problems which impeded the Baltimore City Primary Election of April 26, 2016, to identify specific problems and request the City and State to develop a plan of specific steps to ensure a fair and efficient Baltimore City General Election on November 8, 2016.

Recitals

The right to vote is at the heart of our nation's democratic system. When voting is compromised, whether through fraud or error, the system itself is at risk and must demonstrate exceptional efforts and document specific remedies and their implementation to restore confidence of future efficient and secure accounting for each and every vote validly cast.

In the Primary election of Tuesday, April 26, 2016 many polls failed to open on time for the lack of election judges. Lines formed before the 7am opening, doors remained closed, many voters had to leave and may never have voted.

When late-arriving judges did appear, the day's experience demonstrated a lack of practical training among many new and even experienced judges, all faced with new paper ballots, new protocols for recording them, and a rash of somehow inaccurate party affiliation records for longtime voters.

To cope, voting precincts defaulted to an exceptional use of provisional ballots, many of which have never been adequately accounted for, given the numbers and the circumstances in which so many were cast. We will never know how many of these were cast by properly registered voters defaulted

to provisional through missing or incorrect precinct records.

According to The Sun's report of June 1, 2016, a review by the state election board found that about 1,700 ballots cast in Baltimore's primary election were handled improperly. The board concluded that 1,188 provisional ballots were inappropriately scanned into the vote tally on Election Day without judges verifying that the voters were eligible and 555 other provisional ballots were not considered.

Despite eventual election certifications, voters and the general public have lost confidence in the system and require public accounting of problems identified and resolved to ensure a vastly improved operation of the Baltimore City General Election on Tuesday, November 8, 2016.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls upon leaders of both the State and Baltimore City Election Boards to appear to outline the specific problems experienced in the April 26 election and discuss the plan to successfully address those problems, including specific steps being taken to assure the public of corrective measures.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Election Director, the President of the Baltimore City Board of Elections, the State Administrator of Elections, the Chairman of the Maryland Board of Elections, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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