



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0006R, Version: 0

* **Warning:** This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Cohen

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Lead By Example: Calling on City Council Members and Staff to be Trained in Trauma-Informed Care

For the purpose of calling on the Baltimore City Council and Council Staff to be trained in trauma-informed healing-centered approaches that will enhance realization of the prevalence of trauma in systems, encourage empathic governance, recognize the presence of signs and symptoms throughout systemwide service and program delivery, and address trauma to avoid the barriers to positive human connection and interaction.

Recitals

Whereas, the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act was passed on February 24, 2020 to transform Baltimore's government into a "trauma-informed, healing-centered" model of governance. Baltimore became the first major city in America to comprehensively legislate trauma informed care. Given the continued high rates of homicide, overdose deaths, anxiety, depression, and other forms of trauma in Baltimore, this work is now more urgent than ever.

Whereas, the legislation called for a "Trauma-Informed Care Task Force" to develop a citywide strategy to prevent and respond to trauma. It also required all city agencies to undergo formal training in "healing-centered" trauma-informed care.

Whereas, the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act was passed to prioritize the trauma-responsive and trauma-informed delivery of services to the residents of Baltimore.

Whereas, the Elijah Cummings Healing City Act *did not* include training for City Council leadership and staff.

Whereas, the City Council is the legislative branch of Baltimore City's Government. Legislation has a major impact on the lives of Baltimore's residents. Historically, the City Council has at times passed bills that have caused immeasurable harm to vulnerable Baltimoreans. One such example is an ordinance from 1910 which codified racial segregation in housing and deprived Black Baltimoreans the opportunity to live in certain neighborhoods. There is a clear need for legislators to understand the impact of trauma.

Whereas, the City Council leadership and staff engages directly with residents through hearings, community meetings, and constituent service. Many of the constituents we engage with have experienced high levels of trauma and other adverse experiences.

Whereas, Baltimore City has experienced over 300 homicides in each of the last 6 years.

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, homicide negatively impacts the surviving family members, especially children.

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, the psychological impact includes anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, aggression, guilt, and hyper-vigilance.

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, homicides directly impact a family's ability to cope financially.

Whereas, according to Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc., experiencing trauma as a child can have lifelong consequences.

Whereas, according to Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc., Adverse Childhood Experiences ("ACEs") contribute to negative physical and behavioral health outcomes and may reduce life expectancy by 20 years.

Whereas, according to Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc., in Baltimore, 42% of adults have experienced 3 or more ACEs, compared to 24 % statewide.

Whereas, according to Behavioral Health System Baltimore, Inc., exposure to poverty and racism directly contributes to ACEs. In Baltimore, 24% of people live below the poverty line compared to 9.9% of people statewide.

Whereas, it is critical that City Council Members, as frontline public servants and legislators with the power to shape laws and to provide oversight of City agencies, understand the impact of trauma and operate through a "trauma-informed lens." In order to build a Baltimore that is healthy, safe, and thriving, its legislative branch must acknowledge and fully understand how past laws and practices have contributed to harm and retraumatization of vulnerable people. Council Members must implement trauma informed, healing centered strategies into all facets of our work.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council calls on its members and staff to be trained in trauma-informed healing-centered approaches that will enhance realization of the prevalence of trauma in systems, encourage empathic governance, recognize the presence of signs and symptoms throughout systemwide service and program delivery, and address trauma to avoid the barriers to positive human connection and interaction.

And be it further resolved, That the aforementioned training be conducted with 30 days of adoption of this resolution.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Children and Family Success, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.