



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

File #: 14-0198R, **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 Clarke

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day - December 21, 2014

FOR the purpose of recognizing December 21, 2014 as National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day in Baltimore City to bring attention to the struggle of people experiencing homelessness; to mourn the passing of our neighbors who, in life, lacked stable housing; and to rededicate ourselves to ending the conditions that create and maintain homelessness - poverty, a dearth of housing available to low-income households, and a lack of health and supportive services.

Recitals

For nearly two and a half decades, communities across the country have come together on or near December 21 - the first day of winter and longest night of the year - to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and to remember our homeless neighbors and friends who have paid the ultimate price for our nation's failure to end homelessness. Baltimore City joins a national movement of people - both housed and homeless - in recognizing Homeless Persons' Memorial Day and rededicating itself to preventing and ending homelessness.

According to recent local counts of people experiencing homelessness, the three top health concerns that impact the homeless population in the City of Baltimore are substance abuse, mental health, and chronic illness - all of which are significantly and negatively impacted by homelessness. A 2005 study by the National Health Care for the Homeless Council found that this "trimerbidity" of substance abuse and mental illness together with chronic health problems increases the risk of early death. Indeed, people experiencing homelessness are 3 to 4 times more likely to die prematurely than their housed counterparts and have an average life expectancy of between 42 and 52 years old.

In Baltimore City, recent counts of people experiencing homelessness have reported between 2,600 and 4,100 people without housing on any given night - a small fraction of the number served annually by the City's homeless service providers.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates at least 610,000 people find themselves in shelters, on the streets, or in other places unfit for human habitation on any given night in the United States - a number that does not include the hundreds of thousands who are hidden from public sight or unstably “doubled up” with family and friends, to include a growing number of children and families. Indeed, another report from the National Center on Family Homelessness found 2.5 million children experienced homelessness last year.

While the limited number of people counted - both nationally and locally - vary by year and methodology, the conditions that create homelessness remain steadfast. One in four Baltimoreans live below the federal poverty line - approximately \$11,500 for a single individual, and \$23,500 for a family of four. One third of Baltimore’s children are officially poor.

For households struggling in or near poverty, basic needs - in particular, housing - are often out of reach. The Fair Market Rent for an efficiency unit in Baltimore City is \$847, which is affordable to fulltime workers earning over \$16.29 an hour - over twice the minimum wage. Even earning \$10.10 an hour - the wage floor in Maryland beginning in 2018 - households need 2.4 fulltime jobs to afford a 2 bedroom unit in Baltimore. For people with disabilities, receiving \$721 monthly in federal SSI benefits or \$185 a month in state temporary disability assistance, housing costs far exceed income.

The depth of need and dearth of affordable housing in Baltimore City was apparent in recent months when 74,000 people - 12% of the City’s population - applied during nine short days for a lottery that will ultimately result in only one in ten receiving “Section 8” housing assistance within the next six years.

Maryland’s commitment to Medicaid expansion provides greater opportunities for comprehensive health care for this vulnerable population; however, the most critical health condition - namely, homelessness itself - can be addressed only by increasing the availability of affordable housing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council hereby recognizes December 21, 2014 as National Homeless Persons’ Memorial Day in Baltimore City to bring attention to the struggle of people experiencing homelessness; to mourn the passing of our neighbors who, in life, lacked stable housing; and to rededicate ourselves to ending the conditions that create and maintain homelessness - poverty, a dearth of housing available to low income households, and a lack of health and supportive services.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the President & CEO of Health Care for the Homeless, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

dlr14-1044(2)~intro/01Dec14
ccres/HomlessMem/mw:tw

dlr14-1044(2)~intro/01Dec14
?????
ccres/HomlessMem/mw:tw