



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Scott

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Informational Hearing - College Access for Baltimore City's School Students**

FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools and the CollegeBound Foundation to appear before the Council to discuss ways to raise awareness of the resources available to increase college access for Baltimore City's school students.

Recitals

It is well understood that in today's economy a college education is generally an essential step on the path to a decent job and financial security. In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, even before the recent recession, a high school drop-out was more than 7 times more likely to live in poverty than a college graduate.

Yet, despite the dramatically positive difference that a college education could make in their lives, less than 50% of Baltimore City students enroll in college immediately after high school graduation, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. Even fewer high school graduates, just 1 in 10, will earn a college degree within 6 years.

There are many reasons for the shortage of college degrees among our high school graduates, but, according to the Abell Foundation, "research consistently confirms that the failure to secure college funding is the overwhelming barrier to college enrollment for inner-city kids." Many more of our young people who do enroll in college are unable to complete their studies for financial reasons.

It is easy to see why affording higher education can seem like a daunting barrier to college access for many young people and their families. The College Board estimates that in 2011 the average sticker price for a student to attend a public 4 year college at in-state rates was \$17,131. This average sticker price rose to \$38,589 for a 4 year private institution. In a city with a median household income of less than \$39,000, these numbers can make college seem like an unattainable dream.

However, it is important for prospective undergraduates to realize that few students actually have to pay these sticker prices to gain access to a college education. Again, the College Board estimates that two-thirds or more of all enrolled undergraduates receive grants that reduce the cost of college attendance. In fact, the average student receives an amount equal to more than half of their tuition in grants and tax credits. Some receive much larger grants, and many more also take advantage of work-study opportunities or very low interest student loans. In total, about \$178 billion in financial assistance was awarded to undergraduates in the 2010-11 school year.

With support of this magnitude available, financial concerns need not prevent any of our children from attending college. Unfortunately, too many Baltimore families, many with no history of college attendance to serve as a guide, are not aware of the resources that may be available to help afford college. Navigating the maze of different grant programs can also be very confusing, with awards available for everything from sports and academics, to living in certain neighborhoods or contemplating particular careers, and including need based programs with a variety of different standards. Still, the resources necessary for young Baltimoreans to achieve their college dreams are available; and more needs to be done to help them find these resources.

One local organization working to connect students with all of the resources they need to make college accessible is the Baltimore based CollegeBound Foundation. Since 1988 this group has provided both college advising and financial aid to students in 22 City public high schools and has served 20,000 of the City's most disadvantaged high school students. Programs such as this one can greatly assist students in realizing how obtainable a college education can be despite its daunting sticker price. These programs should be broadly publicized so that all of our City's students can be made aware of the tools available to improve their access to college.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That representatives from Baltimore City Public Schools and the CollegeBound Foundation are invited to appear before the Council to discuss ways to raise awareness of the resources available to increase college access for Baltimore City's school students.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools, the director of the CollegeBound Foundation, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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