



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0240R, 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 Burnett

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **Request for State Action - November 2020 Mail-In Election**

For the purpose of requesting that Governor Hogan make the November election a mail-in election, with the option of election day in-person voting, rather than a regular, in-person election.

Recitals

Whereas, On Wednesday, July 15, 2020, Governor Hogan ordered the State Board of Elections to run a regular, in-person election in November, with all precincts open for in-person voting, and, to accommodate those voters who might feel it is unsafe to vote in-person, to mail each voter an application for an absentee ballot;

Whereas, The Governor's order requires the State Board of Elections to, in essence, conduct two elections - a vote by-mail election and an in-person election;

Whereas, This is a herculean task that sets the State up for failure;

Whereas, Primary elections conducted in a variety of states that required vote-by-mail ballot applications cost millions of additional dollars to be spent by those states, overwhelmed election staff with last-minute applications that could not be processed in time for Election Day, and required extending voting hours as applicants, who were unable to vote by-mail, were forced to the polls;

Whereas, Holding a regular in-person election will require people to spend prolonged periods of time indoors waiting to cast their votes, and the volume of voters at the polls will make social distancing difficult;

Whereas, There will likely be a shortage of private venues to function as polling places due to health concerns, which will make remaining polling places more crowded and less safe;

Whereas, Many traditional poll workers are elderly and at increased risk from COVID-19 and, therefore, are unlikely to volunteer to work the polls this election, and even more poll workers than usual will be needed to hold an in-person election during this pandemic if polling places are to be kept properly sanitized;

Whereas, Voters might be confused by the discrepancies between voting during the primary election and voting for this election;

Whereas, Voters might have difficulty complying with the time line for filling out an application to receive an absentee ballot and thus might completely miss out on exercising their right to vote or might have to risk their health by going to a polling place; and

Whereas, The Maryland Association of Election Officials and at least six County Executives support a “hybrid” vote-by-mail election with extended in-person voting centers.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the City Council requests that Governor Hogan make the November election a mail-in election with the option of election day in-person voting, rather than a regular, in-person election.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Mayor, the Chairman of the Maryland State Board of Elections, the Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Delegation to the 2021 Maryland General Assembly, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.