



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Councilmanic Central Committees

FOR the purpose of requesting the President of the African-American Democratic Club of Baltimore City to brief the Council on the idea of altering the process by which vacant Council seats are filled; to request consideration of a change that would create a more democratic process; and opening a dialogue on available options for assuring that the Council is able to better serve the citizens of Baltimore.

Recitals

The current rules of the City Council state that, when a vacancy occurs in the Council, a nominating committee comprised of current Councilmembers must conduct a public hearing and hold interviews for qualified candidates. The committee then chooses which applicant they would like to nominate and the full Council votes on whether to accept or reject the applicant. This process requires no direct connection to the people whose representation on the Council is at stake.

When the Council was organized by multi-member districts, the nominating committee was comprised of the remaining Councilmembers of the district in which the vacancy occurred. This ensured that the interviewing and winnowing of the candidates was done by people with a direct connection to the district and an in-depth understanding of its specific and local issues.

The creation of Councilmanic Central Committees would restore this more direct connection between the district whose vacancy is being filled, and the process of doing so. While these committees would not have the final say, their input would be invaluable in helping the Council fill the vacant seat.

Each district in the City would have a Councilmanic Central Committee. Its membership would be made up of stakeholders who live in the councilmanic district, nominated by the Councilmember for that district and appointed by the Mayor. Most of the time, the committee would serve as a formal sounding board for the councilperson as well as a body through which information could be disseminated to community associations, businesses, institutions, and other stakeholders.

Should a councilmanic vacancy occur midterm, the Councilmanic Central Committee would be the entity that would hold public interviews and make a recommendation to the Council regarding the replacement. While the Council would still have the Charter right and responsibility to make that final decision, the input of the Councilmanic Central Committee should be a major factor in the decision as to who would fill the vacant seat.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body requests the President of the African-American Democratic Club of Baltimore City to brief the Council on the idea of altering the process by which vacant Council seats are filled; to request consideration of a change that would create a more democratic process; and opening a dialogue on available options for assuring that the Council is able to better serve the citizens of Baltimore.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the President of the African American Democratic Club of Baltimore City, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Council.

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