



City of Baltimore

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

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Henry
At the request of: The Safe and Sound Campaign

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Demolition Funds for Deconstruction

FOR the purpose of supporting the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign's request to dedicate a portion of the City's demolition budget to fund the deconstruction of vacant homes by ex-prisoners.

Recitals

The Education and Youth Committee of the Baltimore City Council held a roundtable discussion on January 19, 2012 that generated a number of ideas worth pursuing. One of the participants, the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign, presented the idea of dedicating a portion of the money spent by the City for demolition to fund the deconstruction of vacant houses by trained ex-prisoners.

This idea would take advantage of money that the City would be spending in any case to achieve multiple goals that would make the City a better place. The Safe and Sound Campaign advocates that the City take \$2 million in either new funds, or funds already allocated in the City's demolition line item, and use those funds to take down vacant homes in a more constructive way.

Deconstruction is a technique for removing a building by essentially taking it apart, rather than blowing it up, or knocking it down, as is done in traditional demolition. It has several attributes that make it preferable to traditional demolition methods.

First, it allows for many of the resources contained in the building to be reused rather than sent to a landfill. This is a more efficient and environmentally friendly methodology. The Safe and Sound Campaign estimates that adopting its funding target could prevent 40,000 tons of waste from being sent to our landfills.

Second, it is a more labor intensive procedure that creates more jobs and can teach workers more useful skills. A greater portion of the costs of taking a building down will go into wages for workers that are likely to stay in the City, rather than being spent on explosives or heavy equipment manufactured far from Baltimore.

Third, the use of ex-prisoners helps to reintegrate former offenders who have paid their debt to society back into the community. Without jobs these returning individuals have no chance to succeed and are more likely to re-offend. Deconstruction work can provide them with a transitional job and give them an opportunity to learn valuable skills that can be applied to this growing "green" industry as well as traditional construction.

This is a creative idea that could help to address the blight caused by vacant homes in Baltimore's neighborhoods while minimizing negative environmental impacts, maximizing the number of jobs and the percentage of spending that stays in the City, and smoothing the transition of ex-prisoners back into the community. It deserves to be further explored and supported.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council supports the Baltimore Safe and Sound Campaign's request to dedicate a portion of the City's demolition budget to fund the deconstruction of vacant homes by ex-prisoners.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Housing Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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