



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Spector

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Informational Hearing - Casino Community Hiring**

FOR the purpose of calling on representatives from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) and the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) to appear before the City Council to discuss the possible benefits of a job development MOU with the Baltimore casino developers, what types of job training and support can best be provided by both the City and developers on this project, and what the next steps should be for ensuring that Baltimore is adequately preparing its workforce for the employment opportunities that the casino will create.

Recitals

According to a September Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) projection, the casino being developed by Caesars Entertainment in Baltimore will create 1939 construction jobs while being built, and 1894 permanent jobs once it is up and running. These numbers may actually understate the casino's employment impact - since the projections were calculated, Caesars has announced that the passage of Question 7 legalizing table games in Maryland will allow it to increase its permanent staff by roughly 40% and raise its overall investment in Baltimore by some \$25 million.

Regardless of what numbers are used, it is clear that the casino will bring thousands of jobs to Baltimore. What is not yet clear is how many of these jobs will go to Baltimoreans. In order for our city to receive the greatest possible benefit from the casino development, it is important that everything possible be done to maximize the number of city resident's filling these positions.

One approach is to mandate that locals be hired, because, in fact, State law allows local jurisdictions to impose local hiring requirements to the extent authorized by local law and permitted by the U.S. Constitution. Further, State rules require that a certain percentage of casino employees be local residents. But they define "local" in a way that will include many areas outside of Baltimore. We cannot rely solely on these rules to encourage Caesars to employ Baltimoreans.

In reality, no local hiring requirement, however drafted, will ever be effective at creating jobs for Baltimore unless our labor force can provide potential employees with the skills needed by the employer. Instead of merely attempting to require Caesars to hire Baltimore residents, we need to empower our workers with the ability to earn these new jobs.

On past projects, the City has succeeded in doing this by partnering with developers through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) early on in a project's development that both identifies what skills and training will be required for employees of the completed project, and creates a framework for the City and the developers to work together to assist community members in obtaining the identified skills and training.

This process should be emulated for the casino project. Representatives from BDC and the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) should be working with Caesars to develop a comprehensive picture of exactly what positions will be needed at the casino and what skill-sets will be required to meet these needs. How well currently existing programs match the requirements of this project should also be evaluated. Then additional trainings, goals, and policies can be created by both the City and the developers to ensure that there are a sufficient number of qualified potential employees available in Baltimore to meet all of Caesars needs.

In order for this effort to succeed it must begin immediately, so that there is ample time to identify adequate resources and to initiate neighborhood-based, faith-based, community-based, and city-wide training programs tailored for these new jobs. The goal will be to have as many eligible Baltimoreans as possible qualified for casino employment by MOED. With construction slated for next year, and the casino targeting a 2014 opening, we cannot afford any delays.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on representatives from the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) and the Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) to appear before it to discuss the possible benefits of a job development MOU with the Baltimore casino developers, what types of job training and support can best be provided by both the City and developers on this project, and what the next steps should be for ensuring that Baltimore is adequately preparing its workforce for the employment opportunities that the casino will create.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the President of the Baltimore Development Corporation, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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