



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 Spector

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Traffic Camera Revenue for Crossing Guards

FOR the purpose of calling on the Administration to act to improve the safety of Baltimore's schoolchildren by dedicating funds from the planned redeployment of speed and red light cameras by the City to increasing the number of crossing guards working to protect our children.

Recitals

Crossing guards are our children's first and often only line of defense against the dangers they may encounter moving between the safer and more controlled environments of school and home. Unfortunately, at current funding levels, there simply are not enough of them to provide all of the protection that parents need and deserve for their children.

Currently, there are just barely enough of the Department of Transportation's crossing guards to cover the most dangerous traffic threats to schoolchildren. There are not adequate funds to hire backup personnel for even these intersections if regular guards are sick or otherwise absent, their posts go unmanned, putting our children at risk where they were expecting aid and protection.

Beyond these intermittent and unpredictable shortcomings, the sad, but all too regular and predictable everyday reality for too many of Baltimore's students is that it is not just traffic that poses a threat coming to and from school. Many elementary and middle school students must walk through open-air drug markets or other crime ridden areas to reach their classes. These children crossing corners where the risk comes from something other than just traffic could benefit from the security of passing under the watchful eye of a crossing guard just as much as those with only cars and trucks to be concerned about. But there are too few guards to watch over them everywhere that they should.

Troublingly, planned realignments of both the school system and the MTA-run bus system appear likely to stretch crossing guards even thinner in the near future. The closure and consolidation of

some neighborhood schools as part of the school system's modernization plans will force some students to walk further to reach new locations; as will the planned reduction in the number of bus stops and routes as part of the Governor's transit proposals for Baltimore. Longer walks will mean more dangerous spots where young children need assistance from crossing guards, but there are simply not any spare guards available today to fill out these new posts.

In order to keep our children safe today, and in the future, more crossing guards are desperately needed. And more funding must be found to provide them.

A natural source for this funding would be the City's reinstated speed and red light camera program. These cameras have long been touted as primarily traffic safety devices — devices particularly concerned with protecting schoolchildren — rather than mere revenue traps. Dedicating money from the fines they generate to funding more crossing guards would make them doubly effective in this role while helping to reassure residents that the cameras aren't being used simply to underwrite the City's general fund.

Dedicating traffic camera revenue to funding crossing guards is an ideal solution to the very real problem of current and future crossing guard shortages that imperils our children. It should be adopted as part of the RFP and approval process for Baltimore's next red light and speed camera program that is currently underway.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on the Administration to act to improve the safety of Baltimore's schoolchildren by dedicating funds from the planned redeployment of speed and red light cameras by the City to increasing the number of crossing guards working to protect our children.

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

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