



City of Baltimore

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

Legislation Text

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* **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 Scott

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Request for Federal Action - Declaring Police Related Deaths of Unarmed Black Americans a Homeland Security Crisis.

For the purpose of calling on President Trump to declare the deaths of unarmed Black Americans at the hands of the police in America a Homeland Security Crisis, and further requesting that the President direct the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to invest resources into solving one of our nation's longstanding and unaddressed problems through either direct action or partnership with local and state governments.

Recitals

People of color comprised just 38.5 percent of the U.S. population, but 51.5 percent of all years of life lost in police related deaths from 2015 to 2016. Furthermore, African Americans died at a rate of 7.2 per million compared to rate of 2.9 per million for White Americans in police related deaths.

The safety and protection of the public while sustaining everyone's civil rights should be the paramount concern and duty of law enforcement officials. The Department of Justice has the monumental responsibility of ensuring that civil rights protections are enforced, especially for those who are too often the target of violations, including Black Americans and other people of color.

Following several high profile in-custody deaths President Obama launched a 21st Century policing taskforce aimed at correcting decades old issues in American Policing. Rather than abdicating federal oversight of policing, these efforts should be built upon and the current Administration should show its commitment to fixing broken policing.

Initially, the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security should call for and incentivize:

- Federal, state, and local prosecutors to prosecute police misconduct. We expect prosecutors to achieve justice and use their power to monitor police abuse.
- Local prosecutors to create a local civil rights unit dedicated to investigating and prosecuting police misconduct fairly, transparently, and independently.
- State attorneys general to provide recommendations and guidelines for local prosecutors and investigators of misconduct to ensure police accountability.
- DOJ as well as state and local prosecutors to launch systemic investigations when agencies are suspected of engaging in “pattern or practice” violations and discrimination.
- Local mayors and city councils to create civilian oversight structures, select police chiefs who prioritize building trust with communities, conduct de-escalation and life preserving trainings, develop protocols to ensure these trainings are observed, and support alternative mental health interventions.
- Every police department to reflect the diversity of the communities they serve and reject misguided practices such as “broken windows” and “stop & frisk.”
- Explore regulations on police use of firearms.

Taking a leadership role in advocating and pushing for these reforms could begin to change policing in America for the better. Discriminatory and un-American practices and policies have been tolerated for far too long throughout our nation. Nationwide leadership will be needed to begin to bring policing practices into line with our values. These steps, that should have been taken long ago, need to be taken now.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council calls on President Trump to declare the deaths of unarmed Black Americans at the hands of the police in America a Homeland Security Crisis; and further requests that the President direct the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security to invest resources into solving one of our nation’s longstanding and unaddressed problems through either direct action or partnership with local and state governments.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the President of the United

States, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.