



# City of Baltimore

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

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 09-0182R, **Version:** 0

---

\* 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 Kraft  
At the request of: Matt Gonter, Patterson Park Neighborhood Association  
Address: P.O. Box 12293, Baltimore, MD 21281

### A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

#### A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning **Request for State Legislation - Split-Level Property Tax Rate**

FOR the purpose of requesting the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the 2010 Maryland General Assembly and the Governor of Maryland to introduce and ensure passage of local legislation to enable the City of Baltimore to establish a split-level property tax rate wherein vacant, nonoccupiable or uninhabitable properties would be taxed at a higher rate than occupiable or habitable properties.

WHEREAS, Vacant properties have negative impact on the safety, value, and quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, A study in Austin, Texas found that “blocks with unsecured [vacant] buildings had 3.2 times as many drug calls to police, 1.8 times as many theft calls, and twice the number of violent calls” as blocks without vacant buildings (William Spelman, “Abandoned Buildings: Magnets for Crime?” Journal of Criminal Justice, 1993); and

WHEREAS, Researchers found that, in Philadelphia, “all else being equal, houses on blocks with abandonment sold for \$6,715 less than houses on blocks with no abandonment” (“Blight Free Philadelphia: A Public-Private Strategy to Create and Enhance Neighborhood Value,” Temple University Center for Public Policy and Eastern Pennsylvania Organizing Project, 2001); and

WHEREAS, Over 12,000 fires occur in vacant structures nationwide each year, causing \$73 million in property damage (“New Tool Ready to Combat Arson: Vacant and Abandoned Buildings Targeted,” American Re, 2003); and

WHEREAS, Because vacant properties create a higher need for City services, including site cleanup and demolition, provision of legal services, police and fire protection, and legal enforcement, these properties contribute disproportionately to City expenses; and

WHEREAS, These properties generally have lower assessed values than occupied properties, and therefore, under the current tax structure, contribute less to the City's property tax base than occupied properties; and

WHEREAS, The current tax structure provides a disincentive for owners of vacant properties to improve these properties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the City Council of Baltimore requests the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the 2010 Maryland General Assembly to introduce and ensure passage of local legislation to enable the City of Baltimore to establish a split-level property tax rate wherein vacant, nonoccupiable or uninhabitable properties would be taxed at a higher rate than occupiable or habitable properties.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Honorable Chair and Members of the Baltimore City House and Senate Delegations to the 2010 Maryland General Assembly, the Mayor, the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of State Relations, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

dlr09-0953~intro/07Dec09  
ccres/StateSplitPropTax/EF:tw

dlr09-0953~intro/07Dec09  
????  
ccres/StateSplitPropTax/EF:tw