



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Scott

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Youth Civic Engagement Month

FOR the purpose of recognizing the month of April, 2014, as Youth Civic Engagement Month in Baltimore, and calling on youth and civic leaders throughout the city to take this opportunity to examine how young people can be brought deeper into government planning, decision making, and problem solving.

Recitals

It's something of a cliché to say that today's youth are our future, but it is also an unavoidable fact. Recognizing this, local governments have long made efforts to involve youth in decision making and on-the-ground efforts to tackle real problems.

In the words of the National League of Cities' (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families' (YEF Institute) Authentic Youth Civic Engagement guide:

“Across the country, municipal leaders are discovering one of their greatest assets: the youth of their city. Increasingly, youth are working with elected officials and other city leaders to tackle the important issues of local government. More and more young people are also discovering that their voices matter to their communities, and that they can make their communities better places to live.

Elected officials and civic leaders find that when they offer meaningful opportunities for youth to be engaged in their communities, more young people participate and encourage their peers to do the same. In addition to engaging the next generation of civic leaders, cities already using this approach have realized many of the following benefits:

- Budget savings and revenue generation
- Increased support for city initiatives

- Improved policies and programs for youth
- Identification as a youthfriendly community
- Improved indicators of wellbeing among youth”.

Baltimore has made real efforts to engage youth with local government and to listen to their perspective on the many issues they face in their day to day lives, but more can always be done. More than 1 out of every 5 Baltimoreans is under 18 years old, it is essential that such a significant segment of our population be involved in addressing Baltimore’s challenges if we are serious about meeting those challenges.

Too many see Baltimore’s youth as a source of problems, or, at best, a passive group to be acted upon. But they are far, far more than that. In fact, when properly engaged they can be our greatest resource for addressing many of the problems we face as a City. We should not let any opportunity to mobilize their energy go to waste, and government should be constantly seeking ways to encourage youth to see themselves as, and to become, part of the solution rather than bystanders to the City’s efforts to improve itself.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council recognizes the month of April, 2014, as Youth Civic Engagement Month in Baltimore, and calls on youth and civic leaders throughout the city to take this opportunity to examine how young people can be brought deeper into government planning, decision making, and problem solving.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, all members of the Mayor’s Cabinet, the Chair of the Baltimore City Youth Commission, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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