



Legislation Text

File #: 08-0004R, Version: 0

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: President Rawlings-Blake

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Inter-Agency Violent Crime Reduction Strategy

FOR the purpose of requesting members of the Mayor's Cabinet, including the Baltimore City Police Commissioner, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Baltimore City Public School System, with coordinated assistance from the Director of the Family League of Baltimore, to combine the unique resources of each agency to develop an interactive, inter-agency strategy to address health, criminal justice, recreation, employment, and other socio-economic issues confronting Baltimore City youth in a comprehensive response to the factors that contribute to or facilitate acts of violence by or upon our City's most vulnerable citizens.

Recitals

In an effort to combat the troubling incidents of violence, especially that attributed to youth, several City agencies have tailored programs to deal specifically with the needs of juveniles and to provide them an outlet for socialization that steers them away from gangs and gang-related criminal activity. The Inter-Agency Violent Crime Reduction Strategy will incorporate these existing programs in a comprehensive strategy based on an analysis of the location and availability of youth programs compared to the likely presence of at-risk youth and will include a studied response that bridges the gap between the delivery of available resources and the needs of this population.

The Baltimore City Health Department's Office of Youth Violence Prevention is dedicated to combating the epidemic of violence among the City's youth through innovative public health programming. The Office operates 3 programs: Operation Safe Kids; Multi-systemic Therapy; and Operation Safe Streets. The Department also works closely with communities, State and local agencies, and public health experts on departmental programs and city-wide, anti-violence initiatives, including the Baltimore City Gang Violence Reduction Plan.

The Department of Recreation and Park's Spring/Summer Recreation Guide offers many opportunities for Baltimore's youth and their families to join in a summer of safe and healthy pursuits. At the recreation centers, campers reunite for yet another season of creativity and fun. Adventures also await at the Carrie Murray Nature Center's nature camp, where children explore the great outdoors and learn to protect the environment, and, as part of

the Therapeutic Division, Camp Variety concentrates more on "possibilities" than on its participants' disabilities. The Division of Youth and Adult Sports promotes the whole individual, good sportsmanship, and an environment that is both fun and competitive.

The Baltimore Police Department's Community Affairs officers have been deployed to high crime areas, focusing on truancy and curfew enforcement in a concentrated effort to reduce juvenile crime and victimization. Using the Inter-Agency Violent Crime Reduction Strategy, the Police Department will enhance these efforts by working closely with the School Police and the Mass Transit Police forces to create a safe zone for children in the hours before students arrive at school and after they leave the structured environment of the school facility.

Specifically, the above mentioned agencies, through regular meetings, are requested to map out enforcement areas where truancy rates are high and apply the program(s) that will best meet the needs of the youth in that area. Moreover, a comprehensive plan should be developed that applies the best program(s) to meet the different scenarios of at-risk youth. Different scenarios should include length of truancy, level of parental involvement, repeat juvenile offenders, as well as any other indicia of an at-risk youth. Conversely, the agencies are also requested to develop a coordinated strategy to market their collective programs so that they reach the largest possible number of all youth, not just those who are considered at-risk. The ultimate goal should be to provide after-school and recreational activities that offer a meaningful and, equally as important, safe outlet for every possible Baltimore youth.

The agencies encompassed by the Inter-Agency Violent Crime Reduction Strategy have an impressive record of understanding and dealing with the particular social, psychological, emotional, and physical activity needs of the growing teen. Increased interagency meetings and cooperation will create a targeted response to these youth and result in a more effective outcome in bridging the geographical and strategic gaps that remain in the delivery of services. A pooling of their resources will result in a proactive program that can go far to make certain that Baltimore's coming "long hot" summer is one of safety, fun, and learning for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body hereby requests members of the Mayor's Cabinet, including the Baltimore City Police Commissioner, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Baltimore City Public School System, with coordinated assistance from the Director of the Family League of Baltimore, to combine the unique resources of each agency to develop an interactive, inter-agency strategy to address health, criminal justice, recreation, employment, and other socio-economic issues confronting Baltimore City youth in a comprehensive response to the factors that contribute to or facilitate acts of violence by or upon our City's most vulnerable citizens.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Police Commissioner, the Health Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice, the Director of the Mayor's Office of Employment Development, the CEO of the Baltimore City Public School System, the Director of the Family League of Baltimore, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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