



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning
Drop the Dress Code

For the purpose of calling on Atlas Restaurant Group, as a community partner with a large footprint along the Baltimore waterfront, to set an example and be a leader in racial sensitivity and social justice by eliminating its dress code entirely as non-inclusive, divisive, and out of step with the values of the City and calling on Atlas to adopt corrective policies that will assist in the long-term to dismantle the discriminatory culture that led to an African-American child and his mother being denied food service.

Recitals

On June 21, in the midst of protests and demonstrations calling for better treatment of African-Americans by the police and a greater focus on racial equity and justice, a mother and her son, both African-Americans, sought guest service at Ouzo Bay in Harbor East. They were denied entrance because of the restaurant's insistence that the 8-year-old was wearing clothing in violation of the restaurant's dress code policy. When the mother pointed out that a white child in the restaurant was wearing similar clothes and had obviously been seated regardless, the restaurant had no viable or rational excuse, but the mother and child were refused service and turned away.

In the days that followed, Atlas Restaurant Group, the owners of Ouzo Bay, issued an apology along with several actions designed to remedy what took place on June 21. Included in those actions were the dismissal of the individual that denied seating to the mother and child and a commitment to workplace racial sensitivity training. Those actions simply do not go far enough, especially when such arbitrary dress codes lead to discriminatory exclusion of persons of color.

Atlas is a neighbor with a large footprint along the Baltimore waterfront. As such, the City Council calls on Atlas to lead by example by eliminating its dress code at all its locations and further implement policies designed to promote racial inclusion.

Specifically, the Council calls on Atlas to establish a safe, reprisal-free, and written policy for employees and contractors, including cooks, janitors, servers, bartenders, hosts, and performers, to report racist policies and actions they observe and allow for the unbiased investigation and resolution of those reports.

Finally, this Council calls on Atlas to be a better neighbor by helping to balance the gentrifying influence of its own establishments by investing in Black-owned businesses and in non-profits, community groups, and

activist groups working to achieve equity and justice throughout Baltimore City, especially in those communities surrounding Atlas locations.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council calls on Atlas Restaurant Group, as a community partner with a large footprint along the Baltimore waterfront, to set an example and be a leader in racial sensitivity and social justice by eliminating its dress code entirely as non-inclusive, divisive, and out of step with the values of the City and calling on Atlas to adopt corrective policies that will assist in the long-term to dismantle the discriminatory culture that led to an African-American child and his mother being denied food service.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the corporate leadership of Atlas Restaurant Group, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.