



City of Baltimore

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

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Middleton, President Young, Councilmember Henry

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
In Opposition to Proposed State Legislation - "Arizona" Anti-Immigration Law

FOR the purpose of expressing opposition to the introduction of anti-immigration law in Maryland that criminalizes immigration and encourages racial profiling; requesting the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly to oppose the legislation if introduced; and urging the Governor to veto this legislation, or similar measures, if passed by the Maryland State Legislature.

Recitals

On April 23, 2010, the Governor of Arizona signed into law what is now considered one of the nation's toughest immigration laws, making it a state crime to be in the country illegally and requiring local police to enforce federal immigration laws. It will require anyone who police suspect of being in the country illegally to produce "an alien registration document" such as a green card or other proof of citizenship, such as a passport or Arizona driver's license. It also makes it illegal to impede traffic by picking up day laborers for work. If a day laborer is picked up for work, and traffic is impeded, that worker will also be committing a criminal act.

In a statement released upon signing the bill into law the Governor stated: "My signature today represents my steadfast support for enforcing the law - both AGAINST illegal immigration AND against racial profiling" and that she had worked to include language in the bill "prohibiting law enforcement officers from solely considering race, color, or national origin in implementing the requirements of" the section that allows a peace officer stop any driver that the officer suspects of violating any provisions of the law.

Despite these disclaimers, the signing was met with protestations, locally and nationally. Locally, opponents promised legal challenges and economic sanctions, and according to media reports, 85% of the calls to the Governor's office were in opposition to the legislation. At the national level, the President criticized the law as "misguided", stating that "the recent efforts in Arizona, which threaten to undermine basic notions of fairness that we cherish as Americans, as well as the trust between police and their communities that is so crucial to keeping us safe."

In addition, in the days following the signing, law enforcement groups and agents in Arizona and across the

country expressed opposition to the law. The Arizona Association of Chiefs of Police and Chiefs of Police across the country, including Colorado Springs, Raleigh, San Francisco, and Sacramento, voiced opposition to the new law, as did Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Groups, including the ACLU, the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

The Los Angeles Cardinal of the nation's largest Roman Catholic archdiocese, with 4.3 million members, spoke for many of the faith-based community stating that the Arizona law was the "country's most retrogressive, mean-spirited, and useless anti-immigrant law. The tragedy of the law is its totally false reasoning: that immigrants come to our country to rob, plunder, and consume public resources. That is not only false, the premise is nonsense."

The President of the National Council of La Raza, the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States held: "This bill throws the door wide-open to the racial profiling of Arizona's Latinos, the vast majority of whom are native-born U.S. citizens and legal residents, without doing a single thing to protect the people of Arizona." And the Congressional Hispanic Caucus: "The president of the United States should simply say, "On the issue of immigration, the Constitution is clear, my power is clear - I'm going to regulate immigration in the United States from a federal level." When you institutionalize a law like this one, you are targeting and discriminating at a wholesale level against a group of people."

And on May 17, 2010, the President and CEO of the NAACP announced that the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, in coalition with the American Civil Liberties Union, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Immigration Law Center, ACLU of Arizona, the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, and the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice, filed a class action lawsuit challenging the Arizona law, charging that it invites the racial profiling of people of color, violates the First Amendment, and interferes with federal law.

In Maryland, we are facing the same unsettling situation as that fomented by enactment of the Arizona law. A Baltimore County Delegate, the frequent critic of policies that he says fail to target illegal immigrants, has announced that he will introduce legislation identical to the Arizona law in the upcoming 2011 session of the Maryland General Assembly.

The Governor's Commission of Hispanic Affairs Annual Report 2008-2009 reports that Maryland's Hispanic population has increased by 65%. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that the newest members of our community are extended the same rights and protections the rest of us seek to preserve and enjoy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body opposes the introduction of anti-immigration law in Maryland that criminalizes immigration and encourages racial profiling; requests the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Maryland General Assembly to oppose the legislation if introduced; and urges the Governor to veto this legislation, or similar measures, if passed by the Maryland State Legislature.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Governor, the Honorable Members of the Maryland Delegation to the 111th Congress, the Honorable Chairs and Members of the Baltimore City Senate and House Delegations to the 2011 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, the President, Baltimore Branch, NAACP, the Board of Directors of Casa de Maryland, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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