



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Conaway

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Should There Be a 4-Day Work Week Instituted in Baltimore City

FOR the purpose of requesting the Director of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, the Director of Finance, and union leaders to brief the Council regarding the option of instituting a 4-day work week for Baltimore City employees, and to help provide information that will aid in creating an open dialogue regarding the issues that could arise during the creation and implementation of such a plan.

Recitals

With the current price of oil being as high as it is, and with no quick solution to the problem in sight, many local and state municipalities have begun to discuss the pros and cons of instituting a 4-day work week. This idea of a 4-day work week is not a new idea, but rather one that came into the mainstream during the energy shocks of the 1970's.

There are many reasons to consider instituting a 4-day work week in Baltimore City. The first and most obvious reason would be to help reduce our dependency on oil. Studies have shown that there could be a 10-20% reduction in the amount of oil we need Monday through Friday simply by rearranging the work week. The institution of a 4-day work week would create a reduction in greenhouse gases and other pollutants. Approximately 60-70% of urban air pollution is caused by cars. Taking 20% of vehicles off the roads during the most traveled time of day would significantly reduce the amount of pollution produced by autos in Baltimore City.

The 4-day work week could also help with traffic congestion. If 20% of all workers were to adopt a 4-day work week, or if the work week was staggered so that 1/5 of all workers took a different day off, the average commuter would see a 20% reduction in rush hour congestion without the building of a single new road. This would help reduce the money spent on new road construction, as well as existing road maintenance.

This plan could also result in a reduction in the personal expenses employees would have with their autos over the course of the life of the car. Not only would a 4-day work week save employees fuel costs, but it would also reduce the mileage and wear and tear that is put on a vehicle. Because employees would be driving less, there would be fewer cars on the road at one time, resulting in fewer auto accidents, and insurance rates could be affected positively for the benefit of the employee.

Despite the positive aspects of the 4-day work week, a plan of this kind will only work if those employees who use it do not spend their day off driving around. If employees use that day to run errands or go out, then the savings would be very limited. The reality is that more money could be spent driving on that day than would be saved by having a 4-day work week. However, if employees were willing and able to devote that extra day to doing work around the home, spending time with family, or even choosing to work from home via a telecommuting system or some other technology, then the idea that employees must be at the office 5 days a week may become a thing of the past.

It is important for City agencies to come together to open the dialogue about this issue. Changing the work week would require agency heads, employees, elected officials, City Unions and citizens to come all work to support the idea and its implementation. An informational hearing will provide a forum for discussion on the issue and allow representatives from many different areas of City employment to have their voices heard. Hopefully this discussion can help Baltimore City move forward in helping to ease the current economic stresses and strains that are negatively affecting City employees and the City of Baltimore every day.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body requests the Director of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, the Director of Finance and union leaders to brief the Council regarding the option of instituting a 4-day work week for Baltimore City employees, and help provide information that will aid in creating an open dialogue regarding the issues that could arise during the creation and implementation of such a plan.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Human Resources, the Baltimore City Labor Commissioner, the Director of Finance, the President of AFSCME Local 44, the President of AFSCME Local 558, the President of AFSCME Local 2202, the President of the City Union of Baltimore, the President of MAPS, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the Council.

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