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Explanation: Capitals indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

*** Warning:** This is an unofficial, introductory copy of the bill.
The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore
Council Bill

Introduced by: Councilmember McCray

A Bill Entitled

An Ordinance concerning
Baltimore City Workgroup on Women in Public Safety
For the purpose of establishing the Baltimore City Workgroup on Women in Public Safety; providing for the composition and staffing of the Workgroup; requiring the Workgroup to study certain matters related to the recruitment, hiring, training, retention, mentorship, and promotions of women in Baltimore City public safety agencies; requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on or before a certain date; providing for a special effective date; providing for the termination of this Ordinance; and generally relating to the advancement of women in public safety professions.

Recitals

Female representation in the nation's approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies has remained static at around 12% for over 25 years. Evaluating the promotional process, that 12% is even smaller as women make up just 3% of police executive leadership positions. This trend follows suit in other emergency agencies. Statistics from the organization Women in Fire show that women in fire and emergency medical service organizations make up just 3.7% of their industry's workforce in the United States, with women of color accounting for only 1 in 5 women within the profession.

Unfortunately, the Baltimore Police Department's and the Baltimore City Fire Department's statistics are on par with national averages. It has been reported that of the Police Department's nearly 2,500 sworn officers, less than 400, or 16%, are women. The Fire Department has approximately 1,700 uniformed personnel and less than 250, or 14%, are women.

The low numbers of women within these professions are a problem that stems from disproportionate barriers in recruitment, retention, mentorship, and the promotion of experienced women. Historically, both agencies have dealt with issues of equity in their promotional practices, more specifically as it relates to women. In the Baltimore Police Department, it was not until 1978 when the first woman was promoted through the ranks and held the command-level position of Major. More recently, in 2020, the Baltimore City Fire Department promoted the first woman to rise through the ranks to the command-level position of Deputy Chief.

Baltimore City has never had a woman lead its Fire or Police Departments. The City currently lags behind its neighbors in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Howard County, and Prince George's County, all of whom have or have had a woman serve as their jurisdictions Fire Chief or Police Chief. Public-safety professionals serving in the community are often the most visible manifestation of government to the public. Because of this, it is critical that the selection process that we use to recruit, hire and promote employees in public safety agencies represents the diversity of our communities.

Accordingly, the Mayor and City Council find cause to study these issues in order to develop a comprehensive strategy on how to increase and retain female representation in our public safety agencies.

Section 1. Be it ordained by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That:

(a) In this Ordinance, "public safety agency" means:

(1) the Baltimore Police Department;

(2) the Baltimore City Fire Department;

(3) the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office; and

(4) the Baltimore City Public School System Police.

(b) There is a Baltimore City Workgroup on Women in Public Safety.

(c) The Workgroup consists of the following members:

(1) 2 Councilmembers as designated by the Council President;

(2) the Police Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department or the Police Commissioner's designee;

(3) the Director of the Office of Equity and Civil Rights or the Director's designee;

(4) the City Administrator or the City Administrator's designee;

(5) the Fire Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department or the Fire Chief's designee;

(5) the Sheriff of the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office or the Sheriff's designee;

(6) the Police Chief of the Baltimore City School Police or the Police Chief's designee; and

(7) the Director of the Office of Emergency Management or the Director's designee.

(d) The Workgroup shall:

(1) for each public safety agency within the City, examine and evaluate:

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(i) the total number of uniformed female employees disaggregated by race and position classification;

(ii) the total number of uniformed female employees who applied, were hired, and have been retained over the previous 7 years;

(iii) the promotional process over the previous 7 years with an emphasis on female participation, testing outcomes, and selection; and

(iv) pre-employment screening process over the previous 7 years with a special focus on physical agility test requirements and female pass/fail rates;

(2) in order to fully and effectively address the issue of recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting women in public safety; analyze:

(i) the barriers that women face in the pre-employment screening process and at the training academy;

(ii) the internal and external complaint systems in place for women to report instances of discrimination, bias, or sexual harassment; and

(iv) how City public safety agencies are working to ensure that women have the appropriate equipment that they need and that the City is providing women with equal facilities that their male counterparts have;

(3) examine the legality and feasibility of creating a local "Women in Public Safety Mentorship Program" aimed at creating a social network that will help recruit more women into public safety careers; retaining more women in the profession; and encouraging women to take part in the promotional process;

(4) develop strategies to ensure that the Police Department is able to successfully accomplish their "30x30" Pledge to reach the 30% mark for women in law enforcement recruitment classes by 2030; and

(5) develop and recommend a draft internal policy for use by City public agencies that will require that 25% of the candidates being interviewed for command-level positions be women who are internal or external of the organization.

(e) The Workgroup shall convene:

(1) its first public meeting within 45 days of the enactment of this Ordinance; and

(2) except as provided in subsection (g) of this Section, at least monthly thereafter.

(f) The Workgroup shall submit a report to the Mayor and City Council with its findings and recommendations no later than the first Wednesday after the 180th day from the enactment of this Ordinance.

(g) After the submission of the report required by subsection (f) of this Section and until the abrogation of this Ordinance, the Workgroup shall continue to meet at least every 3 months to assess and review the implementation of the recommendations set forth in the report.

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Section 2. And be it further ordained, That this Ordinance takes effect on the date it is enacted. It shall remain effective until November 30, 2024; and, immediately after that date with no further action by the Mayor and City Council, this Ordinance will be abrogated and of no further effect.