



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Young

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - SmartBoot

FOR the purpose of requesting the Director and the Chief of Safety of the Department of Transportation to report to the City Council on the status of the PayLock SmartBoot system, citizen response to the institution of self-release vehicle immobilization devices, and the efficacy of the 24/7 Boot Release Help Center in the processing of payments and collection of fees owed to the City by parking ticket scofflaws.

Recitals

In early November 2008, the Administration announced an upgrade of the Department of Transportation's boot/tow operations as part of an overall parking enforcement and scofflaw enforcement program. PayLock, an innovative new program, features a new technology called SmartBoot that is designed to make payment and release easier for booted motorists.

At the beginning of the announcement, there were over 25,000 vehicles with 3 or more delinquent parking tickets on file, accounting for more than \$69 million in outstanding debt owed to the City. It was the goal of the City to use the new program to pursue the most serious parking violators who have ignored all tickets, as well as several mailings notifying them of their delinquency.

The PayLock SmartBoot system is intended to provide a full service parking enforcement and collection program. The owners of vehicles that have been booted will benefit from a self-release vehicle immobilization device, or boot, backed by a 24/7 Boot Release Help Center for payment processing. Booted motorists are given the option of reconciling delinquent parking tickets over the phone without the need to travel to a collection center for payment.

In practice, when a vehicle is identified for non-payment of delinquent parking tickets, a 16-pound SmartBoot device with a electronic lock is attached to a wheel. When payment is made through the Help Center with a Visa, MasterCard or debit card, the motorist is given instructions in boot removal steps and directions to any of 3 boot return locations or in person. Cash payments for booted vehicles are still accepted at the downtown collection center. New policies under the program allow the owners of booted vehicles 48 hours to reconcile their debts before the vehicle is towed.

In instituting the new SmartBoot collections program, City officials expected to improve enforcement of parking laws by offering convenient payment options “on the spot - since the SmartBoot can be released without waiting in most cases; motorists can be back on the road within about five minutes.”

A year after the inception of the PayLock SmartBoot program is a logical time to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in recovering much-needed revenue owed by negligent motorists to a City that can ill-afford not to collect.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Director and the Chief of Safety of the Department of Transportation are requested to report to the City Council on the status of the PayLock SmartBoot system, citizen response to the institution of self-release vehicle immobilization devices, and the efficacy of the 24/7 Boot Release Help Center in the processing of payments and collection of fees owed to the City by parking ticket scofflaws.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Transportation, the Chief of the Safety Division of the Department of Transportation, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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