



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
Request for State Legislation - Child Tracking System

FOR the purpose of urging the Baltimore City Delegation to the 2009 Maryland General Assembly to introduce legislation creating a centralized community and governmental resource that would allow for the collection and integration of Maryland-born childrens' evolving data and would help to share children's information among schools, after-school programs, social service agencies, and medical providers from birth to age of majority, in order to increase positive outcomes for Maryland's youth.

Recitals

Beginning in 2006, the City of Louisville, Kentucky instituted a program to help officials collect and share data about young people, in order to help educators and youth service providers understand the relationship between extra-curricular activities and academic achievement. Utilizing a software called nFocus, the use of an ID card allows records and personal data to be shared with community groups that also have an interest in knowing about the same children. Kentucky was one of the first states to adopt the tracking software.

This program allows community agencies to keep accurate attendance of the students that use their programs. With this information and in collaboration with the school district, programs that serve children and youth in our communities can make a powerful connection to help them succeed in the classroom. As a Community Partner using the Kidtrax software, the agency or organization can pinpoint a child's needs and collaborate on how to support that child. Through the data collection, the partners will be able to segregate the youth that they work with to focus on their academic needs and to provide additional support in the after school hours.

Using a system to track students should not be the only purpose of this program. In addition to scholastic and attendance information sharing, this legislation should provide for data and information sharing between service providers, schools, human service agencies, and various other programs and services. These could include but are not limited to:

- * Student information systems
- * Juvenile Justice data

* Police records

* State and local government agencies

* Health and Human Services

* Other third party data sources

This sharing of information would allow officials and others to not only keep up to date records on children, but to also provide a notification process for when a child could be in potential danger. For instance, if a child were to be absent from school for a certain number of days, hospitals and police departments, as well as parents, could be notified quickly that there could be an issue, and those who are in need of assistance may get what they need in a more efficient and timely fashion.

According to recent reports, one of the major issues in our school system is truancy. Children are simply not where they are supposed to be when they are supposed to be there. This is not always the students' fault. Many times children do not show up to school because their parents simply do not make them go or they have troubles at home. An integrated tracking system would allow responsible entities the power to obtain vital information on children and allow police officers, hospital workers, and various other adults to get necessary information regarding a child by simply scanning his or her ID card or other form of identification.

School age children would not be the only beneficiaries of this program. When a child is born in Maryland, he or she could be given an ID card. When a child is taken to the hospital or doctor, this ID card could be scanned, and that entity could immediately know the child's past medical history, whether he or she has received social services, or whether there have been prior issues for which the child has received medical attention that goes beyond the norm. This could prove important in helping to remove abused children from dangerous situations prior to further abuse and could provide an immediate link between hospital staff and social services.

With the sharing of information between child-centered programs, social service agencies, funding organizations, and medical services, the benefits to the youth and parents of our state are endless. By using the advantage of this new technology, it can be ensured that every child will get the opportunity to have a healthy childhood and a proper education. While no system will ever be perfect in keeping every child safe and educated, some form of identification system would at least enable adults with the necessary vital information to provide expediently the highest level of services needed by that child.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That this Body urges the Baltimore City Delegation to the 2009 Maryland General Assembly to introduce legislation creating a centralized community and governmental resource that would allow for the collection and integration of Maryland-born childrens' evolving data and would help to share children's information among schools, after-school programs, social service agencies, and medical providers from birth through the age of majority, in order to increase positive outcomes for Maryland's youth.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Governor, the Mayor, the Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Delegation to the 2009 Maryland General Assembly, the Director of the Baltimore City Department of Social Services, the Director of the Baltimore City Health Department, the CEO of the Baltimore City Public School System, the Director of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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