



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: President Young

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Funding Recreation Centers by Selling the City-Owned Hilton Hotel
FOR the purpose of calling on representatives from the Baltimore Hotel Corporation, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Finance to appear before the Council to discuss the possibility of funding recreation center upgrades through a sale of the City-owned Hilton Hotel.

Recitals

There is a broad consensus in Baltimore, both within City government and in the community, that we need to make substantial investments in recreation centers to give our youth more opportunities for constructive activities. It's also generally agreed that providing these opportunities is an essential core function of Baltimore City government.

Despite the consensus that more recreation resources are needed, there is no matching consensus on where additional recreation funding can, or should, be found.

One idea under discussion has proposed seeking \$40 to \$60 million of a planned \$136 million in recreation spending from the sale of City-owned parking garages. However, it is questionable whether taking a profit making asset that supports another important municipal responsibility off the books really makes fiscal or policy sense over either the long or short term.

If the City is looking to sell assets to fund the construction of recreation centers it should first look at assets that do not perform a traditional municipal government function, and at those not contributing to the City's budget. Clearly, the City-owned Hilton Hotel would have to top any list of non-traditional municipal asset, and it also has not yet added to the City's bottom line, accordingly it should also top any list of properties that the City should consider selling.

Ending the City's involvement in this project would not weaken the City's ability to perform any of its core functions. But an asset built a mere 7 years ago with roughly \$300 million of public funds could certainly be expected to bring in significantly more than the \$60 million the garage sale advocates hope to generate, perhaps even enough to expand on the currently proposed recreation center building program.

Recreation centers desperately need more funding for construction and maintenance. It is important that this funding be obtained quickly and in a way that doesn't harm the City's financial standing or ability to perform other traditional functions. If handled properly, a sale of the City's unusual publically owned hotel could be the best way to meet all of these priorities. Selling the City-owned Hilton Hotel to pay for recreation center improvements is therefore an idea that should be seriously considered and fully explored.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That the Council calls on representatives from the Baltimore Hotel Corporation, the Department of Recreation and Parks, and the Department of Finance to appear before the Council to discuss the possibility of funding recreation center upgrades through a sale of the City-owned Hilton Hotel.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Baltimore Hotel Corporation, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of Finance, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.

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