



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning **Increased Transparency About Police-Seized Property**

For the purpose of requesting that the Police Department provide the City Council with a full accounting of all seized guns, drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years, along with a thorough explanation of how this material was disposed of, how long the disposal process typically takes, and what the best ways to include community representatives in that process may be.

Recitals

Recent events have highlighted the importance of restoring the trust of all communities in Baltimore's Police Department. Implementation of the consent decree between the Department and the U.S. Department of Justice is expected to bring forward many tangible reforms to improve relations between the public and the police. However, it is important to take whatever confidence building steps can be independently identified in the meantime as well.

One such idea that has been raised in the past would be requiring civilian monitoring of police disposition of seized property and contraband. While there's nothing to suggest that the Police Department routinely mishandles this property, skepticism amongst some segments of the public about police claims regarding the destruction of guns, drugs, dirt bikes and other contraband has sometimes been a source of friction.

Involving civilian witnesses in the Police Department's property disposition process would be a simple and effective way to eliminate this friction while improving police openness and transparency. These witnesses could put to rest any concerns about police destruction of contraband, and their presence would not require any significant change in police practices.

In the meantime, it is important that the public be given more insight into the current processes for disposing of police-seized contraband. The Council should receive a full accounting of all seized guns, drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years along with a thorough explanation of how this material was disposed of, how long the disposal process typically takes, and what the best ways to include community representatives in that process may be.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council requests that the Police Department provide it with a full accounting of all seized guns, drugs, dirt bikes, and cash over the last 5 years, along with a thorough explanation of how this material was disposed of, how long the disposal process typically takes, and what the best ways to include community representatives in that process may be.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Police Commissioner, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.