



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 Traffic Light Synchronization

For the purpose of calling on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

Recitals

On April 18th the Department of Transportation announced plans to begin stepped up enforcement of State law prohibiting motorists from stopping within an intersection. According to the announcement, this new "Don't Block the Box" program will begin issuing warnings on May 1st and will issue citations with \$90 fines and a license point starting a month later on June 1st.

Gridlock and excessive delays in traffic are genuine problems in Baltimore, but they are problems with more than one cause. Drivers who would be subject to this new enforcement could be one of those causes, but they could also be victims of other problems who unwittingly become stuck in an intersection.

Focusing on only one cause of Baltimore's traffic woes is unlikely to be effective on its own, and could have unintended consequences. Ensuring that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized ahead of the Baltimore City Department of Transportation's "Don't Block the Box" program will assist motorists in adjusting to the Administration's new traffic initiative, making it more likely to succeed in its goal of improving traffic flows and less likely to penalize drivers inadvertently stuck because of situations beyond their control.

In addition to helping motorists adjust to the "Don't Block the Box" program, properly synchronized lights provide numerous additional benefits to motorists and pedestrians. Research from the Federal Highway Administration has found that traffic signal management can lead to improved air quality, reduced fuel consumption, less aggressive driving, and better traffic flow.

Until the City has taken steps to ensure that traffic lights are properly synchronized and are not contributing to gridlock, it would be premature to begin aggressive enforcement actions against drivers that could interfere with their ability to legally operate a vehicle. Taking a comprehensive approach to Baltimore's gridlock problem is both more appropriate and more likely to result in real change.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council calls on the Department of Transportation to ensure that traffic lights city-wide are properly synchronized prior to the start of Baltimore's "Don't Block the Box" program.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Director of Transportation, and the Mayor's legislative liaison to the City Council.