



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 McCray

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning

Investigative Hearing - Women in Public Safety: Leveling the Playing Field

For the purpose of requesting that the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, and the Director of the Department of Human Resources come before the Baltimore City Council to provide information about their agencies' strategy to recruit, retain, mentor, and promote more women.

Recitals

Female representation in the nation's approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies has remained stagnant around 12% for more than 25 years. That number gets smaller when evaluated in the promotional process, as women make up just 3% of police executive leadership positions. Statistics from the organization Women in Fire show that females in fire and emergency medical service organizations face the same plight, as they make up just 3.7% of their industries workforce in the United States, with women of color accounting for 1 in 5 females in the profession.

When it comes to the Baltimore Police Department and the Baltimore City Fire Department their statistics are on par with national averages. It has been reported that of the Police Department's nearly 2,500 sworn officers, less than 400, or 16%, are women. Similarly, the Fire Department has approximately 1,700 uniformed personnel, but fewer than 250, or 14%, are women.

The low numbers faced by women in these professions are a problem that stems from disproportionate barriers in recruitment, retention, mentorship, and the promotion of experienced women. Historically, both our local agencies have dealt with issues of equity in their promotional practices, more specifically as it relates to women. In the Baltimore Police Department, it was not until 1978 when the first woman was promoted through the ranks and held the command-level position of Major. More recently, in 2020, the Baltimore City Fire Department promoted the first woman to rise through the ranks to the command-level position of Deputy Chief.

Baltimore City has never had a woman lead our Fire or Police Departments. Yet, at this very moment in time, the City lags behind its neighbors in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Howard County and Prince George's County, all of whom have or have had a woman serve as their jurisdictions Fire Chief or Police Chief. Public-safety professionals serving in the community are often times the most visible manifestation of government to the public. Because of this, it is critical that the selection process that we use to recruit, hire and promote employees in public safety agencies represents the diversity of our communities.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Council requests that the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, and the Director of the Department of Human Resources come before the Baltimore City Council to provide information about their agencies' strategy to recruit, retain, mentor, and promote more women.

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, the Director of the Department of Human Resources, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.