



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0597, Version: 0

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

Introductory*

City of Baltimore

Council Bill

Introduced by: Councilmember Costello

A Bill Entitled

An Ordinance concerning

City Property - Renaming Riverside Park Pool to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool

For the purpose of changing the name of Riverside Park Pool, located at 1800 Covington Street (Block 1940, Lot 001), to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool.

By authority of

Article 5 - Finance, Property, and Procurement
Section 20-2
Baltimore City Code
(Edition 2000)

Recitals

Elijah E. Cummings, the longtime United States Representative for much of Baltimore City, grew up in Sharp-Leadenhall in South Baltimore. As a child, Cummings would join other youths playing in the wading pool at the Sharp Street Community Center. The small pool was not sufficient for the community it was serving. One day in 1962 the center's recreation leader, Jim Smith, gathered up some two dozen Black youth including Cummings and walked down to Riverside Park Pool.

In the wake of 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education*, both Maryland Governor Theodore McKeldin and Baltimore City Mayor Tommy D'Alesandro issued executive orders integrating public facilities, but in practice, the Riverside Park Pool was whites only. As the Sharp Street swimmers used Riverside Park's pool over several days, as many as 1,000 white protestors flooded the area, hurling insults, rocks, and bottles. One of those bottles hit the young Elijah, resulting in a scar he would carry with him for the rest of his life. Other Black youth were also injured during these visits, as was Juanita Jackson Mitchell, a lawyer with the NAACP who was the first Black woman to practice law in the state of Maryland. Mitchell and the NAACP sought a blue ribbon commission to investigate the series of incidents, which was refused by then-Governor John Millard Tawes.

The Baltimore City Council seeks to honor the dedicated service of Cummings, as well as his, Mitchell's, and the other community member's participation in the integration of the Riverside Park Pool. By renaming

the pool for Congressman Cummings, we recognize the event as part of the larger Civil Rights Movement and Maryland's role in it. The integration of the pool stands alongside the 1960 Morgan State College student sit-ins at Baltimore department stores, the Congress of Racial Equality and Freedom Rider sit-ins of 1961, the 1962 Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee demonstrations on the Eastern Shore, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have A Dream" speech delivered in August 1963, a year after the scenes at Riverside Park. The City of Baltimore and its longtime champion Elijah E. Cummings are essential elements of the Civil Rights Movement.

Section 1. Be it ordained by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, That the name of Riverside Park Pool, located at 1800 Covington Street (Block 1940, Lot 001), is changed to the Congressman Elijah E. Cummings Community Pool.

Section 2. And be it further ordained, That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day after the date it is enacted.