

**R026-0405**

10       **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING WITNESS INTIMIDATION IN BALTIMORE CITY**

20       **WHEREAS:**     On Saturday January 16, 2005 at 1:30 AM, several Molotov cocktails were  
30                               thrown through the window of a community activist speaking out against drug  
40                               dealers in Baltimore City; and,

50       **WHEREAS:**     The victim, not identified, was targeted because she cooperated with the local  
60                               police and the Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives Agency in identifying  
70                               drug dealers in her community; and,

80       **WHEREAS:**     Thankfully, the victim was not injured in the attack and was relocated to a safe  
90                               location shortly after the attack; and,

100      **WHEREAS:**     The men, accused of committing this horrible act of violence were identified as  
110                              Jackie Brewington, 18, Antonino Newsome, 18, Richard Royal, 20, and Andre  
120                              Wilkins, 31; and,

130      **WHEREAS:**     The incident came about six weeks after a homemade DVD called "Stop  
140                              Snitching" hit Baltimore streets, warning people they could "get a hole in their  
150                              head" for telling police about illegal drug activity; and,

160      **WHEREAS:**     The production includes music, dancing and spoken messages, with clips  
170                              showing men stuffing wads of cash into their pockets, driving in convertibles,  
180                              smoking marijuana and flashing diamond-encrusted watches; and,

190      **WHEREAS:**     Intimidation by drug dealers is a top legal concern in Baltimore, where a  
200                              husband and wife and five children were killed in 2002 after their home was  
210                              firebombed in retaliation for calls to police against drug dealers; and,

220      **WHEREAS:**     On August 23, 2002, police reports indicate that Angela Dawson was assaulted  
230                              outside of her home while cleaning graffiti from her siding; and,

240      **WHEREAS:**     On August 25, 2002, police reports indicate a brick being thrown through the  
250                              kitchen window of the Dawson residence and a few shards of the glass went into  
260                              one of the children's eye; and,

270      **WHEREAS:**     At 2:18am on the morning of October 16 2002, a man kicked in the front door,  
280                              splashed gasoline around—paying close attention to the staircase, the only  
290                              escape route from the upstairs bedrooms—and lit the gas on fire; Angela,  
300                              Carnell, 43, Lawanda Ortiz, 14, Juan Ortiz, 12, Carnell Jr., 10, and the twins  
310                              Kevin and Keith, 9, were in their rooms on the second and third floors; and,

320      **WHEREAS:**     Mayor O'Malley publicly stated, "People have a very easy time blowing off  
330                              homicides in the city of Baltimore. But the fact of the matter is ... these kids had  
340                              absolutely no culpability in what happened to them. And I am going to do  
350                              everything in my power to make sure the sacrifice they made was not in vain;"  
360                              and,

370      **WHEREAS:**     State lawmakers will consider legislation this session to toughen penalties for  
380                              those who intimidate witnesses; and,

390      **WHEREAS:**     "The law should have been passed last year, it was my greatest disappointment  
400                              of last year. This is now a national issue with a national profile. We're going to  
410                              have the state's attorneys from all over the state to support this year's bill,"

420 Governor Bob Ehrlich said; and,

430 **WHEREAS:** "The numbers speak for themselves. The murder rate, the drugs and gun issue, is  
440 prevalent and good people need this protection, good people willing to testify  
450 against the bad guys," Governor Ehrlich said; and,

460 **WHEREAS:** The Governor said prosecutors like Baltimore City State's Attorney Patricia  
470 Jessamy have been effective in their efforts to publicize the need for tougher  
480 penalties and he also stressed the importance of the proposed statute; and,

490 **WHEREAS:** "We're working very hard to get a witness intimidation statute that has teeth.  
500 Right now, it is a misdemeanor," Jessamy said.

510 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges  
520 Baltimore City Mayor Martin O'Malley to evaluate his administrations policy  
530 toward witness intimidation and protection as well as his administrations policy  
540 toward encouraging the public to come forward by instituting policies that foster  
550 an environment of safety; and,

560 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Baltimore  
570 City Council to commission an investigation into the administrations policies on  
580 witness intimidation and protection and offer its findings to the Mayor and his  
590 administration on how to improve its policies in this matter; and,

600 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges Governor Robert  
610 Ehrlich, Jr. to evaluate his administrations policy toward crime within the city of  
620 Baltimore as well as his administrations policy toward encouraging tough crime-  
630 fighting measures that would promote and foster safer communities; and,

640 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Maryland  
650 General Assembly to pass legislation that will make it a felony to intimidate  
660 witnesses; and,

670 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges Mayor Martin  
680 O'Malley, Governor Robert Ehrlich, Jr. Speaker Michael Busch, and President  
690 Mike Miller to work together in forging policy that will bring a dramatic  
700 reduction to the criminal element plaguing Baltimore City; and,

710 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature praises State's  
720 Attorney Patricia Jessamy in her efforts to combat witness intimidation by  
730 working with State leaders to toughen the penalties for witness intimidation.

740 **MANDATES:** Mayor Martin O'Malley  
750 Council President Shelia Dixon  
760 Governor Robert Ehrlich, Jr.  
770 Lt. Governor Michael Steele  
780 Speaker of the House Michael Busch  
790 President of the Senate Mike Miller

**SPONSOR:**

Craig Reynolds, Anne Arundel Community College

**COSPONSORS:**

Brian Bailey, Governors Political Liaison, University of Maryland Baltimore County  
Daniel Bowen, Tories Caucus Whip, University of Maryland College Park