

CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL NO. 220 - FIRST READER

---

By: Councilmembers O'Malley, Stokes, Ambridge, Sfikas, Cain,  
D'Adamo, Bell

Requested by:

Address:

Introduced: May 11, 1992

Adopted: December 10, 1992

Assigned to: Taxation and Finance Committee

---

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL AGENCIES: Dept. of Finance,  
Board of Estimates, Dept. of Real Estate

---

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A RESOLUTION concerning

2 PROPERTY TAX MODERNIZATION

3 FOR the purpose of expressing support for the Henry George  
4 Foundation tax reform recommendations and urging the state  
5 legislature to permit local property tax modernization, by  
6 permitting local governing bodies to adopt separate tax  
7 rates for land and improvements.

8 WHEREAS, The City has the highest property tax rate in the  
9 entire State of Maryland; at \$5.90, the City's rate is more than  
10 double that of any other subdivision; and

11 WHEREAS, High property taxes act as a significant deterrent  
12 to housing construction and housing rehabilitation, penalizing  
13 those who invest in the City's future and those who maintain and  
14 improve their property; and

15 WHEREAS, The City contains thousands of vacant lots and  
16 abandoned buildings that offer neither jobs nor housing to the  
17 community and which place an added burden on City agencies, as  
18 well as having a blighting influence on neighborhoods; and

19 WHEREAS, It has been shown that for every dollar in property  
20 tax revenue collected by the City, 72 cents is taken from housing  
21 and other structures while only 28 cents comes from land; and

22 WHEREAS, The actions of real estate speculators and  
23 irresponsible landlords often lead to substandard and  
24 deteriorated housing which enjoys a lower tax liability; and

25 WHEREAS, The City must act to expand its tax base and reduce  
26 the tax burden on responsible property owners in order to prevent  
27 flight from the City and to attract home buyers and employers;  
28 and

29 WHEREAS, The Henry George Foundation of America has issued a  
30 report entitled: Property Tax Reform and Urban Revitalization: A  
31 Cause and Effect Plan for Baltimore, which recommends a plan for

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[BRACKETS] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

1 modernizing the property tax system by placing greater emphasis  
2 on taxing land values and exempting, in whole or in part,  
3 buildings or structures from the property tax; and

4 WHEREAS, The thrust of this plan is to encourage property  
5 owners to build on and improve their properties without the fear  
6 of incurring a higher property tax bill; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED BY THE ~~MAYOR AND~~ CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That  
8 the City of Baltimore supports the recommendations of the Henry  
9 George Foundation Report and urges the Maryland State Legislature  
10 to amend the Annotated Code of Maryland to permit the City of  
11 Baltimore to modernize its property tax system and differentiate  
12 the tax rate placed on land from that placed on buildings and  
13 improvements; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the  
15 Governor, the President of the Maryland State Senate, the Speaker  
16 of the House of Delegates and the members of the City Legislative  
17 Delegation.