



## Legislation Text

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By this joint resolution, the Mayor and City Council express their support of the cost reductions and efficiencies/reforms in furtherance of recommendations of the Economic Advisory Committee.

To express support for the Reform and Efficiency Action Plan contained within this Resolution that will lead to cost savings and a continued high delivery of services, specifically in the areas of 1) Employee Benefits; 2) Safety Reforms; 3) Efficient Management & Using Technology; and 4) Partnerships, and to declare an emergency.

**WHEREAS**, since the national economic recession in 2001 the City of Columbus has consistently been required to reduce its general fund budgets below continuation funding largely as a result of income tax revenues not growing at the rates experienced during the preceding 25 years, with the result that the 2009 budget is \$155 million below continuation funding from 2001 levels; and

**WHEREAS**, in an effort to further control spending, the City of Columbus has cut spending below even these reduced budgets by nearly \$67 million over this period of time; and

**WHEREAS**, these reductions have included such things as a 30% reduction in civilian employees and an increase from 3% to 9% in the employee share of health benefit costs, yet general fund revenues remain insufficient to fund essential public safety and neighborhood services; and

**WHEREAS**, even with these dramatic steps to reduce expenditures while maintaining the highest possible level of services for our residents, the City of Columbus - along with our state and nation - is now experiencing what is being called the worst economic recession in over sixty years, severely jeopardizing City service delivery and neighborhood infrastructure levels that our residents depend on; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to this, the City of Columbus commissioned the Economic Advisory Committee in March 2008 to analyze the financial condition of the City's general fund; and

**WHEREAS**, the Economic Advisory Committee issued a report of its analysis on March 5, 2009 concluding that the City General Fund faces a fiscal imbalance of \$80 to \$120 million; and

**WHEREAS**, the Economic Advisory Committee report recommends that the fiscal imbalance be resolved through a combination of job creation and retention, cost reductions and efficiencies, and revenue enhancements; and

**WHEREAS**, the Economic Advisory Committee report included specific cost-saving recommendations and efficiencies/reforms that have been further studied by the City of Columbus; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has identified the following cost-saving measures with a goal of full implementation over the next ten years:

- A phase-out of the pension pick-up, where the City currently pays the employee share of pension contributions;
- A phased increase of the employee share of health benefit costs;
- A continued review of health benefit enrollees to ensure that the City is only providing health insurance to individuals eligible under the City's employee benefit plan;
- A review of existing overtime policies and the establishment of new policies to discourage excessive overtime;

A redeployment of uniformed police and firefighters from jobs that could be civilianized to jobs that provide direct public safety services;  
A continuation and expansion of energy efficiency measures to include building weatherization, energy efficient lighting, and more efficient heating and cooling;  
A continuation and expansion of efforts to improve fleet management efficiency;  
A continuation and expansion of on-line auctions to dispose of the City's surplus assets;  
Continue and expand the use of technology to promote efficiency and generate savings; and  
The pursuit of partnerships such as the collaboration with Metroparks to incorporate City trails into the regional trail network.

**WHEREAS**, the City has brought on an outside consultant who is in the process of comparing and benchmarking compensation (salary, health care, and pension compensation) paid to City employees and will produce a report in June, 2009 with its findings as well as recommendations on how to ensure that Columbus employees' compensation is comparable with the market based on like occupations in the public and private sectors; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has identified several other areas from the Economic Advisory Committee report that will require further study; and

**WHEREAS**, it is appropriate and important that the City of Columbus demonstrate continued commitment to more efficient government and reforms as part of the solution to its fiscal imbalance; and

**WHEREAS**, attached is a more detailed explanation of the 10-year efficiency and reform plan; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the City of Columbus, in that it is immediately necessary to support the cost-saving initiatives outlined above for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**Section 1.** The Mayor and City Council of Columbus express support for the cost-saving initiatives and efficiencies/reforms listed in this Resolution as a necessary and integral part of a strategy to confront the City's long-term fiscal imbalance.

**Section 2.** That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its adoption and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after adoption if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.