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***Baltimore City Council President Bernard C. “Jack” Young’s
Address at the Swearing-In Ceremony for the 72nd Baltimore
City Council***

(Remarks as prepared)

War Memorial Building, December 8, 2016

BALTIMORE, MD. (December 8, 2016) – Thank you! Thank you all for being here. Please be seated.

To my wife Darlene, and our daughters Teaira and Kendra, to my granddaughters Madisyn and Brynn and my son-in-law Brandon; to my mother Ida Mae Rather, and to my late father, Sandy E. Young, who is here in spirit, and to my brothers and sisters; to Rev. Dr. Solomon, Imam El-Amin and Rabbi Tenebaum; to Mayor Pugh – I offer a special congratulations. Thank you for your friendship and partnership. On behalf of the entire City Council, we are truly looking forward to joining you in the work of moving Baltimore forward; to Sen. McFadden; to the members of the 72nd Baltimore City Council; to our Master of Ceremonies, Vic Carter; to Zoe Michal, director of today’s swearing-in ceremony; and to the citizens of Baltimore, thank you for trusting me to serve you once again. I am extremely honored to stand before you as the President of the 72nd Baltimore City Council.

You have, in part, placed our city’s future in the hands of the City Council, and we promise you that we will exceed your expectations.

Five years ago to the day, I stood before you and promised that the 71st City Council would work hard to advance an agenda that improved the lives of average Baltimoreans.

Together, we rolled up our sleeves and passed legislation that’s made a difference.

We approved sweeping legislation that removed questions about an applicant's criminal past from the pages of a job application, making it more difficult for employers to discriminate against citizens.

We passed a historic Local Hiring law that lowered unemployment by requiring that a portion of new workers hired for City contracts be Baltimore residents.

We led the demand for police reform by introducing oversight legislation of the Baltimore City Police Department, and we were the first elected body to demand that the federal government conduct a full-scale civil rights investigation into the Baltimore Police Department. We also led Baltimore's push to bring body cameras to the police force.

We strengthened Baltimore's ethics laws and passed legislation requiring regular audits of Baltimore's agencies – a move that will save taxpayers' money and restore trust in government. And just last month, the citizens of Baltimore overwhelmingly approved my charter amendment to create a Children and Youth Fund that will guarantee a yearly pot of money solely for programs and services that support young people in Baltimore.

We've spent the past five years working hard to improve our city and it is a fact that we've advanced the ball down the field.

We've been forced backward a few times, but we've also converted a couple of timely third downs.

To echo President Obama, our city, "by many measures is stronger and more prosperous" than it was five years ago. "But change is never easy or quick. We know that we have not met all of our challenges in one term, and that more work is ahead of us."

The members of the previous Council worked hard and tirelessly to improve Baltimore. It is now up to the members of the 72nd Council to take up the fight for justice, and continue to serve the people of Baltimore City with integrity and passion that foster innovative ideas.

I am proud to stand here before you and say that I know for a fact that the 72nd City Council is up to the task.

In the new term, the City Council will improve Baltimore's neighborhoods by forming strategic partnerships with nonprofit organizations and leading businesses.

A great deal of this work is already underway. Our role, frankly, will be to speed up the process and help government work hand-in-glove with leaders from the private sector to improve the quality of life for Baltimoreans in every corner of the City.

In Northeast Baltimore, a section of the city that has experienced recent spikes in violent crime, a neighborhood nonprofit is partnering with local government to take a holistic approach to

improving public safety. It's a model that could serve as an example for similar neighborhoods throughout Baltimore.

Johnette Richardson, executive director of Belair Edison Neighborhoods, Incorporated, who is here with us today, is leading an effort that views crime as an issue that's bigger than the police department. Through partnerships, Mrs. Richardson is creating a framework around a coordinated response to crime in her community. This involves working with city agencies – from the Departments of Health, Transportation, Public Works, Housing, the Liquor Board, Baltimore Development Corporation, and a host of other agencies, as well as stakeholders outside of government.

In the coming months, my office and members of the council will work closely with Mrs. Richardson and her group to develop a targeted approach to driving down crime – it's a plan that could serve as a citywide crime fighting model.

Another important role of local government involves reducing vacant housing in Baltimore. These buildings, which can be unsafe and serve as drug havens, are more than just eyesores. While Baltimore has made progress in eliminating blight, more needs to be done.

This council will partner with organizations that have the capacity to eliminate blight, and an ability to create jobs and new housing options for a growing workforce.

One such nonprofit is Details, a social enterprise operated by Humanim. Details puts people to work deconstructing houses and reclaiming the building materials to re-use on projects throughout the City. One deconstruction job done by Details creates six to eight times more jobs than standard demolition. Run by director Jeff Carroll and Cindy Truitt, and under the leadership of Humanim President and CEO, Henry Posko, all of whom have joined us here today, Details – and a number of other organizations – are transforming whole communities in Baltimore. I would like to thank the organization for leading on this important issue. My colleagues and I are proud to have such strong partners as we work to transform the City of Baltimore.

We know how important this work can be.

Since its population peaked in the 1950s, Baltimore has lost about 350,000 residents. We'll need to increase our demolition efforts in order to right size our housing supply. But it's more than just getting rid of ugly, dangerous vacant buildings. The bricks and boards coming out of these houses help fuel an economy that can turn abandoned buildings into resources. This Council stands ready to work with nonprofit developers to support the type of demolition that reinvests in Baltimore by creating sustainable, good paying jobs that can support families.

In Baltimore, our oldest non-profit housing provider, St. Ambrose, is working to transform whole blocks on the Westside. Under the steady leadership of executive director Gerard Joab,

who's also joined us here today, St. Ambrose is committed to breathing life into once thriving blocks that have fallen on hard times.

But they can't do it alone.

This Council, through partnerships with organizations like St. Ambrose, plans to work with Mayor Pugh and the Department of Housing to develop a system to help better evaluate non-profit developers. Doing so would help quickly identify and fast track organizations with a proven record of success. We would like to cut the red tape and create a pre-clearance screening process that helps non-profit developers scale up their work in a manageable way, and in the process create a better Baltimore for all.

In the words of the great Barbara Mikulski, "each one of us can make a difference. Together, we make change."

Members of the 72nd City Council, let's go and be the change that Baltimore deserves.

Thank you very much, and may God bless the Great City of Baltimore.

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