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## PRESS RELEASE

Today a family from West Baltimore continues to grieve the loss of a loved one, and pray for another one who is fighting for their life. This is in direct result of Mayor Shelia Dixon and Baltimore Fire Chief James Clack's budget cutbacks imposed on YOUR fire department.

The Mayor and Fire Chief have placed a price tag on yours and your neighbor's lives. They say it is acceptable to close up to five Baltimore City Fire Units, one permanently and four on a rotating basis. On the morning of December 9, 2009 it cost a citizen their life, and severely injured another. During that alarm, Truck Company 18 from North and Bloomingdale was closed to save money. Ironically, Truck Company 16 from McCulloh and McMechen was sent in its place. Not only is Truck Company 16 greater than 2 miles farther from the fire, but they are slated to be closed PERMANENTLY on January 1, 2010, by Mayor Shelia Dixon. Additionally, Engine Company 8 from Lafayette and Gilmore was also closed to save money. That meant Engine 14 from Hollins and Monroe had to be sent in its place. That is also another unit on the proposed chopping block to save money. Not only did this delay the unit responses, it took away fire protection from those units' primary response districts.

This is not the first time that the rotating closures have cost a life. On October 25, 2009, a woman in Northeast Baltimore had to wait for 9 minutes for a Fire Department unit to arrive while she was having a medical emergency. That unit was Truck Company 15, once again ironically one of the units whose closing was proposed. The closest unit, Truck Company 26, was closed to save money. That woman was found by firefighters in cardiac arrest. Despite their best efforts, she died four days later.

There are national standards for Fire Department response times. Baltimore does not meet those times now. If more units are closed, we will fall even farther from them. In 2007 the department faced severe fines and penalties, as well as the death of a recruit, when they failed to follow the National Standards. Why have they not learned?

Money can be saved other places. Please contact your City Council Representative, the City Council President, the office of the Mayor and the office of the Fire Chief, and let them know that your life does not have a price tag on it, STOP THE FIREHOUSE ROULETTE.

Our members will be in the Bolton Hill Community this afternoon to alert them to these "Penny-wise, Pound foolish" cuts. Today the neighborhoods of Roland Park (Truck 25), East Baltimore (Engine 6), Park Heights (Engine 45), Westport/Cherry Hill (Engine 58) and Southwest Baltimore/Irvington-Yale Heights (Engine 30) will lose part of their fire protection because of rotating closings.