



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## RESOLUTION NO. 250171

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**Introduced February 27, 2025**

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**Councilmember Ahmad**

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## RESOLUTION

Recognizing the critical importance of legal representation in protecting the rights of immigrants when interacting with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and encouraging all immigrant serving organizations to promote legal resources.

WHEREAS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) enforcement actions continue to create fear and instability among immigrant communities in the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Immigrants often face complex and intimidating legal proceedings that can have life-altering consequences, including detention and deportation, without access to adequate legal representation; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Immigrant Justice Center, detained immigrants are 11 times more likely to pursue relief when they have legal counsel and twice as likely to obtain relief compared to those without legal counsel; and

WHEREAS, Many immigrants are unaware of their legal rights when confronted by ICE and may unknowingly waive protections available to them under the law; and

WHEREAS, Ensuring access to legal representation is a fundamental issue of due process and justice, and providing City-supported and non-profit resources, including legal defense funds, pro bono services, and know-your-rights training, is essential to safeguarding immigrant communities; and

WHEREAS, Promoting legal assistance hotlines and expanding partnerships with nonprofit legal organizations such as the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the Philadelphia Legal Assistance, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania will help Philadelphia residents access timely and effective legal counsel when faced with ICE enforcement actions; and

WHEREAS, Public defenders at the Defender Association of Philadelphia are working to establish an Immigration Defense Unit, which will play a crucial role in protecting the rights of immigrants

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who find themselves entangled in the criminal justice system. The IDU will stand ready to represent immigrant communities in Philadelphia experiencing unjust outcomes by providing expert legal counsel and fighting deportation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes the critical importance of legal representation in protecting immigrant communities and urges its residents to use legal resources when facing ICE enforcement; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council works to increase awareness of available legal services, including the promotion of hotlines and legal aid organizations, to ensure that every resident, regardless of immigration status, has access to legal counsel; and

FINALLY RESOLVED, That the Philadelphia City Council reaffirms its commitment to ensuring due process for all immigrants, standing against unjust immigration enforcement practices, and advocating for policies that protect Philadelphia's immigrant communities.