

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 020054)

## RESOLUTION

Supporting the right to education of the children of Holy Cross Girls' Primary School in Belfast, Ireland, and condemning the violence that has erupted there.

WHEREAS, Violent clashes between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland has unfortunately become far too frequent over many centuries of unrest and decades of bloodshed; and

WHEREAS, For the young girls aged four to eleven who attend Holy Cross Girls' Primary School in north Belfast, the "troubles" are a part of their day-to-day life and further motivation to pursue an education to ensure a successful future; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately even their education has been disrupted, as the small Catholic elementary school, isolated in a Protestant area, has turned into a focal point of conflict, beginning last September when anti-Catholic extremists utilized threats, slurs, and acts of violence to blockade the students' entrance to the school, setting off months of violent protests simply over which route small children should walk to their school; and

WHEREAS, In December the protests outside the school were suspended by an agreement forged by Northern Ireland politicians, but tensions remained and these Loyalists thugs returned to their violence protests just days into the new year, resulting in some of the worst violence in that region in recent history, with several hundred having been injured to date in several nights of heavy rioting; and

WHEREAS, Holy Cross School was forced to close for several days when the Red Hand Defenders, a Loyalist paramilitary organization, issued blanket death threats to all Catholic teachers, and an armed gang attacked teachers' cars in the parking lot of a nearby school, prompting fears that all Catholic schools in the area would be targeted and causing the teachers union to threaten to strike; and

WHEREAS, Two weeks ago tens of thousands from both faiths marched together in protest against the continuing violence around the Holy Cross School, where Northern

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Ireland Secretary of State John Reid stated, "children should not have to pay the price of the failure of adults to live together in peace"; and

WHEREAS, It is clearly essential that all children around the world, regardless of their faith, should be able to pursue their education free from fear of random violence, and that all children must be properly protected going to and coming from school, and that this violent abuse of the school as a peaceful sanctuary should be condemned by all citizens of the world; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council support the right to education of the children of Holy Cross Girls' Primary School in Belfast, Ireland, and condemn the violence that has erupted there.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution,  
Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fifth of February, 2002.

Anna C. Verna  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Kenney and DiCicco

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Nutter, Ortiz, Blackwell, Rizzo, Tasco, Clarke,  
Reynolds Brown, Miller, Goode, Cohen, Krajewski and Council  
President Verna

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*RESOLUTION NO. 020054 continued*