

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 241100)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the critical need for the City of Philadelphia to address vacancies in public safety positions, especially school crossing guards, to protect the well-being of its residents and uphold the City's commitment to community security.

WHEREAS, On October 21, 2024, a 65-year-old woman was fatally struck by a vehicle outside Catharine Elementary School in Southwest Philadelphia as a reckless driver attempted to reverse down a one-way street and lost control; and

WHEREAS, This incident, which occurred in a school zone where three crossing guards were assigned, happened because there was a critical gap in coverage and thus underscores the importance of not only traffic mitigating measures, but also the presence of school crossing guards to monitor and manage traffic in and around school zones; and

WHEREAS, The successful execution of Philadelphia's Vision Zero initiative, which aims to eliminate all traffic-related deaths and severe injuries by 2030, is inclusive of safe school zones and therefore requires an effective, fully staffed School Crossing Guards Program that is currently only 85% staffed according to the Department of Streets; and

WHEREAS, The chronic vacancies within the School Crossing Guards Program are informed by persistent recruitment difficulties in certain neighborhoods, which themselves bear the brunt of a lack in crossing guard coverage the most, exacerbating an already dangerous situation; and

WHEREAS, The School Crossing Guards Program's vacancy issue is not unique, given that as of early 2023, the Philadelphia Police Department faced approximately 836 vacancies in its authorized strength of 6,000 officers, with an additional 470 officers unable to perform street duty due to injuries, resulting in a significant staffing shortfall; and

WHEREAS, The City's overall municipal workforce experienced an 8% reduction from 2019 to 2022, reaching its lowest level in over a decade, adversely impacting various public services, especially public safety; and

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WHEREAS, These staffing shortages have led to a noticeable increase in avoidable violence as witnessed at Catharine Elementary last month, as well as increased response times, heightened pressure on existing personnel, and challenges in adequately addressing the community's safety needs; and

WHEREAS, A fully staffed public safety workforce is essential for maintaining effective law enforcement, fire protection, emergency medical response, and community-oriented safety initiatives, all of which contribute to reducing crime rates, preventing property loss, and saving lives; and

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize the urgent need to prioritize the filling of vacancies in public safety positions, encouraging City leaders and relevant departments to expedite recruitment, onboarding, and retention efforts to safeguard the welfare of our communities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Council encourages collaboration between City agencies, community organizations, and educational institutions to develop initiatives that support recruitment for public safety roles, foster pathways to these careers, and ensure a dedicated, diverse, and well-trained workforce to meet the needs of all Philadelphia residents.

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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 twenty-first day of November, 2024.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
INTERIM CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Ahmad

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ahmad, Thomas, Brooks, O'Rourke, Driscoll,
O'Neill, Squilla and Bass