

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 010244)

RESOLUTION

Calling on owners and landlords who rent to citizens, including those with physical and/or mental disabilities, to take every step necessary to legally operate and safeguard such properties and further calling on citizens of Philadelphia who know or are aware of such properties, to be moved by their individual conscience and sense of fairness to report to city agencies any and all acts inconsistent with compliance thereby assisting in the prevention of human tragedies such as that which occurred on Friday, April 13, 2001 in North Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, An electrical fire at Indiana House, a three-story row-house where rooms were rented to the disabled and the elderly claimed eight lives and left three other residents homeless on Good Friday of this year and has generated reactions that range from shock and grief to a sense of profound and senseless loss. At times like these, the temptation to place the fault on either an entity or individual is heightened; and

WHEREAS, Despite the existence, or lack thereof, of personal attention to the needs of tenants by caretakers of the rooming house, such services were rendered within an aging structure with poor wiring and inadequate fire alarm and safety device(s). Such deficiencies clearly placed them within an imminently dangerous situation that compromised any other undertaking for or on their behalf; and

WHEREAS, Housing advocates interviewed by local papers in the wake of this tragedy are of the opinion that such occurrences demonstrate the City's need for better and more abundant low-income housing particularly in light of the growing number of Philadelphians on the verge of reaching their lifetime limit for welfare benefits; and

WHEREAS, According to the Fire Department, four people died in boarding-house fires in the City last year. Inspecting only commercial establishments and places with licenses, the Department is often not aware of the whereabouts of illegal boarding houses. Likewise the threat of daily fines ranging from \$25 to \$300 for violators of local ordinances that clearly mandate a procedure for the safe operation of boarding homes are ineffective unless complaints are received on their whereabouts or practices; and

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WHEREAS, The immeasurable loss of human life and potential can neither be replaced by neighbors relating information to agencies or adherence to laws and administrative procedures. However, active participation, by each, for the betterment of all, of the citizenry of Philadelphia is the lasting tribute that will provide positive change; now therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, By virtue of this resolution, hereby calls upon owners and landlords who rent to citizens, including those with physical and/or mental disabilities, to take every step necessary to legally operate and safeguard such properties and further calling on citizens of Philadelphia who know or are aware of such properties, to be moved by their individual conscience and sense of fairness to report to City agencies any and all acts inconsistent with compliance thereby assisting in the prevention of human tragedies such as that which occurred on Friday, April 13, 2001 in North Philadelphia.

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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 nineteenth of April, 2001.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Miller

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Ortiz, DiCicco, Reynolds Brown, Blackwell, Kenney, Clarke, Tasco, Cohen, Mariano and Nutter

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