



City of Philadelphia

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

RESOLUTION NO. 250348

Introduced April 10, 2025

Councilmember Young
for
Council President Johnson

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the establishment of the Special Committee on Reform of ACT 135, the *Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act*, to develop recommendations for reforming the Act to prevent its use for exploitation of vulnerable communities.

WHEREAS, In 2008, Governor Rendell signed into law the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act (Act 135) as a tool to expedite the redevelopment of blighted properties in Pennsylvania by allowing a non-owner to petition the Court for the legal authority to enter and repair blighted properties without the consent of the owner; and

WHEREAS, Under Act 135, community members may petition the court for the right to rehabilitate blighted properties and be reimbursed for the costs, including legal and developer fees; and

WHEREAS, Despite its intent to facilitate redevelopment, Act 135 has been exploited by predatory developers and some non-profit entities, leading to the exploitation of vulnerable communities, particularly in areas where property-owners are at high risk of displacement due to rising real estate values; and

WHEREAS, A 2023 study by the Advocacy for Racial and Civil Justice Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, found that petitions under Act 135 were disproportionately filed against Black and Asian American property owners, resulting in the displacement and exploitation of longtime residents in neighborhoods already at risk of gentrification; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has a responsibility to protect the public welfare and ensure that its most vulnerable residents are not further exploited by unscrupulous developers misusing the legal process; and

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WHEREAS, The creation of a Special Committee on Reform of Act 135 will provide an opportunity to review and assess the current application of the law and recommend legislative or policy changes to prevent exploitation, while addressing blighted and nuisance properties; and

WHEREAS, The Special Committee will include members of the community, City Council, the General Assembly and the Mayor's Administration; and

WHEREAS, The Special Committee will provide a full report of its findings and recommendations to all stakeholders, including the General Assembly, the City Council the Mayor and members of the public; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council hereby authorizes the establishment of a Special Committee on Reform of Act 135, the *Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act*, to analyze its effectiveness in reducing blight and develop recommendations for reforming its application to better protect vulnerable communities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Special Committee's duties shall include conducting hearings, identifying areas for reform, collaborating with community members, and issuing legislative recommendations to better align the law with its original intent.

FINALLY RESOLVED, That the Special Committee shall submit a full report to the Council and the Mayor detailing its findings and recommendations, which will also be made available to the public.