

# City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 020171)

## RESOLUTION

Authorizing the City Council Committee on Law and Government to conduct a full and comprehensive investigation of allegations that biological and chemical research was forced upon people incarcerated in the Philadelphia Prisons during the years 1949 to 1974.

WHEREAS, It has been alleged that thousands of men and women who were incarcerated at various Philadelphia prisons, including Holmesburg, the House of Correction, and the Detention Center, for a period beginning in the 1940's and ending in 1974, were used as test subjects for medical and chemical testing; and

WHEREAS, This was allegedly done with the full knowledge and assistance of the City of Philadelphia which was responsible for the care and custody of the individuals incarcerated in its institutions; and

WHEREAS, The individuals were purportedly subjected to testing conducted primarily by the University of Pennsylvania and doctors associated with the University; and

WHEREAS, The testing was allegedly funded by various pharmaceutical and chemical companies, including but not limited to, Johnson and Johnson and Dow Chemical, as well as the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, The prisoners were purportedly subjected to tests of unknown and harmful drugs, chemicals and radioactive materials, which caused them incalculable physical harm and damage; and

WHEREAS, The companies involved in these experiments allegedly made millions of dollars in profits, none of it shared with the subjects of their experiments; and

WHEREAS, The University of Pennsylvania allegedly sanctioned these experiments as appropriate and ethical; and

WHEREAS, Many of the people so imprisoned and upon whom this research was allegedly performed, are still alive, with numerous of them living in Philadelphia; and

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WHEREAS, Many of such people have purportedly become ill or died as a result of said experimentation, and many have illnesses and injuries that remain to this day; and

WHEREAS, This group has been effectively blocked from legal and moral restitution by the same governments that allegedly subjected them to these experiments; and

WHEREAS, This experimentation on the people in the prisons, if true, violated their constitutional and human rights and are a moral blemish in the City of Philadelphia; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council's Committee on Law and Government is hereby authorized to conduct a full and comprehensive investigation into the nature, character and effects of the chemical and biological research forced upon people incarcerated in the Philadelphia prisons during the period from 1949 to 1974, and the appropriate remedies for such involuntary experimentation; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Chairperson of the Committee, in furtherance of such investigation, is hereby authorized to issue such subpoenas or other process as he deems necessary or appropriate to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of the Home Rule Charter.

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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 fourteenth of March, 2002.

Anna C. Verna  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Marie B. Hauser  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Cohen

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Cohen, Tasco, Nutter, Goode, Ortiz, Mariano, Clarke, Kenney, DiCicco, Miller, Reynolds Brown, Blackwell and O'Neill