



City of Philadelphia

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

RESOLUTION NO. 250361

Introduced April 10, 2025

Councilmember Bass

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the creation of a "Special Committee on Child Separation in Philadelphia" to review child separation practices in Philadelphia's child welfare system and develop recommendations to ensure compliance with state child protective services law, protect children, uphold due process rights of families, and prevent the unnecessary break-up of families.

WHEREAS, Separation of children from their families, even for the short term, results in emotional and physical harm and toxic stress, disrupting a child's brain architecture and affecting health with long-term consequences for the child, the family, and the community; and

WHEREAS, The issue of child separation from families arises within municipal child welfare systems, and Pennsylvania, like every jurisdiction, mandates that child separation occur only when absolutely necessary, recognizing that while such separations may be required in certain situations, they must always be done with careful consideration of the child's well-being and safety; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has among the highest poverty rate of any large city in the country, and the highest child separation rate, three times that of New York City and four times that of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, There is no evidence that Philadelphians are more likely than others to abuse their children; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that children in foster care experience higher rates of abuse, including physical, verbal, and sexual maltreatment, often at the hands of staff in residential facilities and are also at increased risk of sex trafficking, with reports indicating that lax screening and oversight contribute to this vulnerability; and

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RESOLUTION NO. 250361 continued

WHEREAS, Other large cities have successfully developed and implemented reforms that have had a large positive impact on reducing child removals, promoting child welfare, and strengthening families; and

WHEREAS, Immediate action must be taken to improve the safety, supervision, and care of children in temporary placement facilities, ensuring that appropriate oversight, mental health resources, and safeguards against exploitation are in place to protect vulnerable children from harm and facilitate stable and appropriate foster placements; and

WHEREAS, The "Special Committee on Child Separation in Philadelphia" was previously established to review child separations in Philadelphia's child welfare system, and it is now necessary to reconvene this committee to further review the current practices, assess the impact of prior recommendations, and provide updated recommendations to improve child welfare policy and practice in Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council hereby establishes the "Special Committee on Child Separation in Philadelphia," consisting of City Council members and other stakeholders appointed by the Council President, to continue its review of child separation practices in Philadelphia's child welfare system and develop updated recommendations to ensure compliance with State Protective Services Law, protect children, uphold the due process rights of families, and prevent the unnecessary break-up of families.