

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 100109)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing City Council's Committee on Public Safety and Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold a public hearing to investigate the Department of Human Services current policies and procedures for tracking children and investigate new and innovative ways to track and protect all those who are going through DHS and to ensure that anyone who fraudulently violate or tampers with evidence shall be held to the highest degree.

WHEREAS, It is unfortunate that all across the country cases arise where children "fall through the cracks" of Child Welfare Agencies and without a true and real tracking system, there is nothing that can be done to verify if and when these children were last seen; and

WHEREAS, It should not takes horrific cases such as 5 year old Rilya Wilson, who in 2002 had disappeared after being placed by the state into foster care in Miami, only to find that the case worker had admitted to not seeing Rilya in 17 months, but had altered her records to indicate that she was "thriving" in placement; and

WHEREAS, Florida's Department of Children and Families has been phasing in a child-tracking program that proves technology does exist which allows the caseworker to document each visit to a child by snapping a cell-phone photo of the child; and

WHEREAS, The technology in these special phones not only stamps the picture with the visit's time and date but also uses GPS technology to pinpoint the place where the picture was taken; and

WHEREAS, DHS will soon pilot 25 devices, similar to Florida's, among staffers investigating emergencies involving children under the age of 5; and

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WHEREAS, The urgency of action requires implementing quick “out of the box” ideas such as requiring that at each visit, caseworkers snap a cell-phone photo of the child they're overseeing and send the photo to a designated e-mail address at DHS, as proof of the visit; and

WHEREAS, Our number one concern is to protect our most vulnerable and even though we are currently crippled with budgetary constraints, we must do all that we can to protect our children.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council Hereby Authorize City Council’s Committee on Public Safety and Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold a public hearing to investigate the Department of Human Services current policies and procedures for tracking children and investigate new and innovative ways to track and protect all those who are going through DHS and to ensure that anyone who fraudulently violate or tampers with evidence shall be held to the highest degree.

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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-fifth of February, 2010.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Miller and Reynolds Brown

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Miller, Reynolds Brown, Council President Verna, Councilmembers Greenlee, Blackwell, Kenney, Jones, Green, Goode, Krajewski, Clarke, Kelly, Tasco and DiCicco