

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 020695)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Council Committees on Public Safety and Health & Human Services, to jointly investigate the Administration's current methods and systems for addressing the proliferation, use and abuse of illegal drugs in the City, including, in particular, a review of the recently released report issued by the Philadelphia Police Department's Integrity and Accountability Officer, its conclusions and recommendations, the success of the Safe Streets program, and alternative methods of effectively addressing the drug plague in our City.

WHEREAS, A recently released internal report, issued by the Philadelphia Police Department's Integrity and Accountability Officer, presents an alarming and disturbing array of findings relating to the performance and management of the Police Narcotics Bureau – citing, among other items, questionable arrests, missed court appearances, incomplete case monitoring, and a lack of safeguards against possible corruption; and

WHEREAS, The document, an internal critique of the police department's drug enforcement operations, is a positive step in addressing inadequacies and required changes in our efforts to improve the management and decision-making protocols of internal police probes; and

WHEREAS, Both the Police and independent journalistic investigatory reports -- confirmed by observations by the responsible supervisory judges in both Municipal and Common Pleas Courts -- suggest the existence of a court system that is "overwhelmed, overworked, undermanned and under funded," resulting in a "significant number" of dismissed cases; and a "drug court crisis"; and

WHEREAS, An appreciable number of cities and states which have experienced similar systemic alarms, and malfunctions, have discovered them to be the result of approaches which are too heavily weighted with punitive and other legalistic approaches (arrests, non-violent criminal prosecution, incarceration, interdiction, etc.) while neglecting and/or underfunding approaches that might reduce the demand for illicit drugs (social services, treatment, case management, education, etc.); and

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WHEREAS, A 1997 report issued by City Council's Public Safety Committee identified recommendations to address the continued proliferation of the drug plague including: greater educational and training support of police officers; improved coordination between relevant health, human services, community non-profit agencies and law enforcement institutions; re-deploying the "beat cop" as an officer engaged in community-inspired crime prevention strategies; the creation and funding of a "Drug Court," that would avail non-violent drug related offenders of a comprehensive network of social and rehabilitation services; and

WHEREAS, The federal government spends two thirds of its \$19 billion budget for its "War on Drugs" on enforcement and interdiction resulting in skyrocketing prison populations comprised 60% of poor, minority and addicted inmates; and

WHEREAS, The Rand Corporation's Drug Policy Center found that for every dollar spent on treatment, taxpayers saved \$7 by avoiding other societal costs largely through reduced crime, fewer medical expenses and increased worker productivity; and

WHEREAS, Arizona and California have adopted initiatives requiring nonviolent offenders to be offered treatment in lieu of jail, with Michigan, Florida and Ohio considering similar measures on this November's ballot, and systemic changes in New York's court system are expected to divert 10,000 non-violent drug addicts from jails by 2003 to rehabilitation programs; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 35 passed in California with 61% of the vote, allocated \$120 million annually for five and one half years for treatment services and is estimated to save California taxpayers \$1.5 billion; and

WHEREAS, According to a recent ABC News poll, more than two thirds of Americans favor treatment over jail for first and second time drug related offenses; and

WHEREAS, Across the country and around the globe, restorative justice programs are emerging as a powerful tool utilized by government and community agencies to repair the socio-economic and emotional damage of many non-violent criminal offenses to realize benefits that include victim/offender reconciliation, productive restitution, and reduced recidivism; and

WHEREAS, City Council has the duty and desire to assess the short term and long term costs and benefits of existing drug enforcement programs, projects, and operations, initiated and conducted by the City Administration and its Departments, as well as possible alternatives thereto; now therefore

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RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council hereby authorizes the Council Committees on Public Safety and Health & Human Services, to jointly investigate the Administration's current methods and systems for addressing the proliferation, use and abuse of illegal drugs in the City, including, in particular, a review of the recently released report issued by the Philadelphia Police Department's Integrity and Accountability Officer, its conclusions and recommendations; the success of the Safe Streets Program, and alternative methods of effectively addressing the drug plague in our City.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Council authorizes the Chairperson of the Committee on Public Safety to issue subpoenas and such other process as may be necessary or appropriate in furtherance of such investigation 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 thirty-first of October, 2002.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Marie B. Hauser
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Ortiz, Tasco and Nutter

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