



City of Philadelphia

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

RESOLUTION NO. 260094

Introduced February 5, 2026

Councilmember Ahmad

Referred to the
Committee on Law and Government

RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter providing for the creation of the Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission; and providing for the submission of the proposed amendment to the electors of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Families, caregivers, and youth who interact with the City's child welfare system and related services for children and families require transparent, community-grounded oversight that reflects their lived experiences; and

WHEREAS, An independent body empowered to advise both City agencies and City Council will bridge the gap between administrative policy and the realities faced by children and families in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The creation of a permanent, community-rooted commission will strengthen accountability, amplify family voices, and support continual improvement of Philadelphia's services for children and families; and

WHEREAS, Under Section 6 of the First-Class City Home Rule Act (53 P.S. §13106), an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter may be proposed by a resolution of the Council of the City of Philadelphia adopted with the concurrence of two-thirds of its elected members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA:

SECTION 1. That the following amendment to The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter is hereby proposed and shall be submitted to the electors of the City of Philadelphia on an election date designated by ordinance:

ARTICLE III

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EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH – ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER 1

OFFICERS, DEPARTMENTS, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND OTHER AGENCIES

§ 3-100. Executive and Administrative Officers, Departments, Boards, Commissions and Agencies Designated.

The executive and administrative work of the City shall be performed by:

* * *

(e) The following independent boards and commissions, which, except for the Board of Trustees of the Free Library of Philadelphia, are hereby created:

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Philadelphia Prison Community Oversight Board[.];
Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission.

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CHAPTER 8

INDEPENDENT BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

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§ 3-815. *Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission.*

(a) *There shall be a permanent body to be known as the Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission (the “Commission”), which shall serve as an independent, standing advisory entity responsible for providing analysis and recommendations regarding the City’s child welfare system and related services to children and families.*

(b) *Composition. The Commission shall consist of fifteen (15) members, as follows:*

1. *Six (6) representatives from the Impacted Community—parents, caregivers, or adults with lived experience in the child welfare system;*
2. *Four (4) members from the Advocacy and Expert Community—individuals with demonstrated and effective experience in child welfare advocacy, research and praxis, or legal/community work who have not been named parties in a personal capacity in litigation against the City’s Department of Human Services (DHS); and*
3. *Five (5) ex officio members: the Youth Ombudsperson or their designee, an appointee from the Philadelphia School District, an appointee from DHS, an*

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appointee from the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS), and an appointee from the Department of Public Health (DPH).

4. *No current employees or direct contractors from the represented City Agencies, other than the ex officio representatives, shall serve as Commissioners.*

(c) Leadership. The Commission shall elect a Chair of the Commission annually among the members of the Impacted Community by unanimous consent. The Chair of the Commission shall:

1. *Preside over all public meetings and hearings;*
2. *Serve as the official point of contact for the Commission; and*
3. *Serve unlimited one-year terms as Chair of the Commission upon re-election by the Commission.*

(d) Terms and Appointments. All initial appointments to the Commission shall be made within sixty (60) days after the Commission is first created.

1. *Members from the Advocacy and Expert Community shall serve staggered two-year terms, not to exceed two consecutive terms.*
2. *Members from the Impacted Community shall serve staggered two-year terms, not to exceed two consecutive terms.*
3. *Members shall be appointed as follows:*
 - i. *The six (6) Impacted Community members shall apply through an open application process and be selected by an independent Selection Committee convened by the Council President and jointly comprised of Council and Administration representatives;*
 - ii. *The initial Selection Committee shall be comprised of the Council President, the Chair of the Public Health and Human Services Committee and the Mayor;*
 - iii. *The four (4) Advocacy and Expert Community members shall be appointed by City Council; and*
 - iv. *The five (5) ex officio members shall be designated by their respective appointing authorities.*

(e) Procedures and Operations.

1. *The Commission shall adopt by-laws within sixty (60) days of its formation.*
2. *Commissioners shall receive training on DHS operations, confidentiality, and trauma-informed practice within ninety (90) days of appointment.*
3. *The Commission shall hold quarterly meetings and may convene additional sessions as needed.*
4. *The ex officio members shall have no voting rights on the Commission, and no ex officio member shall serve as an officer or any other position of authority established by the by-laws.*

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5. *All voting by the Commission shall only be relevant to operations of the Commission.*

(f) Removal and Vacancies. Commissioners may be removed for misconduct, absence, or actions that undermine the work of the Commission.

1. *Any non-ex officio Commissioner may motion for removal of another member, which must be seconded by another non-ex officio Commissioner and voted on within seventy-two (72) hours.*
2. *A vote of at least eight (8) Commissioners shall be required for removal.*
3. *Within seven (7) days following a removal, a written report summarizing the rationale, process, and recommendations shall be submitted to City Council.*
4. *A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled for the balance of the unexpired term in the same manner as an original appointment.*

(g) Compensation. Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(h) Executive Director. The Commission shall appoint and fix the compensation of an executive director. The appointment of an executive director shall require a vote of at least eight (8) members of the Commission. The executive director must be appointed within thirty (30) days of the Commission's formation. The powers and duties of the executive director shall be defined in writing by the Commission.

ARTICLE IV

EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH – POWERS AND DUTIES

The Mayor, The City Representative and Departments, Boards, Commissions and Offices under the Mayor

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CHAPTER 30

Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission

§ 4-3000. Purpose and Duties.

The Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission shall:

1. *Provide independent, community-grounded advisement on the City's child welfare programs, policies, and practices as well as related services to children and families;*
2. *Hold quarterly public meetings and community hearings to collect qualitative and quantitative feedback from residents, parents, caregivers, and youth;*
3. *Publish an annual "State of Child Welfare in Philadelphia" report summarizing community experiences and trends;*
4. *Issue annual Legislative Recommendations to City Council and Policy Recommendations to City Agencies based on feedback and findings;*

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5. *Serve as a formal point of engagement between City agencies, Council, and the public regarding child welfare operations and outcomes;*
6. *Operate transparently, maintaining publicly accessible records of meetings, transcripts, and reports; and*
7. *Be advisory in nature and shall not possess investigative or enforcement authority. It may request, but shall not be entitled to, proprietary or confidential DHS data.*

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APPENDIX

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CHAPTER A-2

§ A-200. Schedule.

This Charter shall become effective on the first Monday of January, 1952, except in the following particulars:

* * *

(30) *The amendments to this Charter relating to the Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission shall take effect upon certification of the election at which the amendments were approved.*

Italics indicates matter added to the Charter by these amendments.