

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 240109)

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States Congress to pass the bipartisan Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods (*VICTIM*) Act which will give law enforcement the support they need to investigate violent crime and increase the closure rate of homicide cases.

WHEREAS, U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), John Kennedy (R-LA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), and Thom Tillis (R-NC), as well as Representative Dwight Evans (PA-3) reintroduced the bipartisan Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act (*VICTIM*) Act, a bill to help improve the clearance rate for murders and violent gun crimes. The legislation would establish a grant program at the Department of Justice (DOJ) to provide funding to state, tribal, and local law enforcement agencies to hire, retain, and train detectives and victim services personnel to investigate unsolved homicides and support victims; and

WHEREAS, The national clearance rate for murders, or the percentage of murder cases solved by law enforcement agencies, has been in continual decline for decades and, in recent years, has reached its lowest point. Between 2019 and 2022, murder clearance rates fell from 61 percent in 2019 to 53 percent, marking an all-time low. This means that today, almost half of murders in the United States go unsolved, leaving families with no answers, closure, or justice; and

WHEREAS, Tragically, people of color disproportionately suffer from murders and poor clearance rates. Despite comprising 13.4 percent of the U.S. population, Black victims made up at least 54 percent of those murdered in 2022, and local and national reports show that cases involving Black and Hispanic victims go unsolved at substantially higher rates than those involving white victims; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, there are over 2,000 unsolved murder cases, dating back to the 1970s. The majority of the case's victims are people of color. This issue causes not only pain and unanswered questions for families but can create an overall distrust and lack of respect for law enforcement. With the high volume of homicides that occur in the City, outdated equipment, and staffing issues contribute to the challenges that the Philadelphia Police Department face when dealing with high homicide rates; and

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WHEREAS, The Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods Act, or the (VICTIM) Act, will be used to improve clearance rates for homicides and violent gun crimes by allocating funds for: hiring and retaining detectives and evidence-processing personnel to investigate and solve, homicides and violent gun crimes; acquiring, upgrading, or replacing investigative, evidence-processing, or forensic testing technology or equipment; training detectives and personnel in effective procedures and techniques; developing evidence-based practices to improve clearance rates; and, ensuring victims and family members of homicide victims receive mental health treatment, grief counseling, relocation support, emergency shelter, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, This bipartisan bill, if passed, will benefit the City of Philadelphia and its families, who are still seeking answers. With extra funding dedicated to solving unsolved murders, improving training, and updating equipment, the Philadelphia Police Department will be able to serve justice more effectively. This bill is vital to the City of Philadelphia, and it is necessary that it be passed and signed into law: now, therefore, be it.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls on the United States Congress to pass the bipartisan Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods (*VICTIM*) Act which will give law enforcement the support they need to investigate violent crime and increase the closure rate of homicide cases.

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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-ninth day of February, 2024.

Elizabeth McCollum
INTERIM CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones, Phillips, Harrity, Driscoll, Gauthier,
Gilmore Richardson, Squilla, Thomas, Lozada and Bass