

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 170412)

RESOLUTION

Urging the Pennsylvania State Legislature to adopt Senate Bill 1134, which seeks to enhance conviction integrity in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by ensuring access to post-conviction DNA testing.

WHEREAS, DNA testing is uniquely capable, among forensic disciplines, of conclusively identifying the perpetrator of a crime; and

WHEREAS, According to the bill's sponsor, Senator Stewart J. Greenleaf, 333 people, including 12 Pennsylvanians, have been exonerated by DNA testing to date; and

WHEREAS, Among those 333 cases, 163 actual perpetrators have been identified, enabling their conviction for 145 additional crimes, including 77 rapes and 34 murders; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's Act 109, enacted in 2002, has enhanced conviction integrity but, nevertheless, does not ensure that persons convicted of crimes have full and fair access to DNA testing in the post-conviction context; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1134 removes several current statutory and judicially created barriers to testing, including requirements that a petitioner be currently serving a sentence, and not have pleaded guilty; and

WHEREAS, These modifications bring Pennsylvania into closer conformity with emerging national standards for post-conviction DNA testing; and

WHEREAS, These enhanced safeguards will advance the critical goal of increased conviction integrity, ensuring that innocent individuals are not unjustly incarcerated and that actual perpetrators are brought to justice; now, therefore, be it

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RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council hereby urges the Pennsylvania State Legislature to adopt Senate Bill 1134, which seeks to enhance conviction integrity in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by ensuring access to post-conviction DNA testing.

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RESOLUTION NO. 170412 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fourth of May, 2017.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Johnson

Sponsored by: Councilmember Johnson