

Legislation Text

File #: 240047, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Council Committee on Commerce & Economic Development to hold hearings regarding the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act of Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, In 2008, Governor Rendell signed into law, Act 135 - the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act ("Act 135") as a tool to potentially expedite ways for stakeholders to redevelop a blighted property without acquiring the parcel via condemnation; and

WHEREAS, Under Act 135, an eligible stakeholder can petition the Court of Common Pleas for the legal authority to enter, improve, and revitalize a blighted property and be reimbursed for the costs incurred for this redevelopment; and

WHEREAS, According to a recent Philadelphia Inquirer Article, nonprofits have filed more than 570 Act 135 petitions just in Philadelphia alone; and

WHEREAS, By allowing for the payment of costs, legal fees and developer fees resulting in an automatic twenty percent (20%) windfall of rehabilitation cost or sales price to the petitioner, this law has been exploited by predatory developers, non-profit entities and real estate professionals through the misappropriation of judicial resources to extort poor and vulnerable communities; and

WHEREAS, A 2023 study by the Advocacy for Racial and Civil Justice Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania's law school concluded that the conservatorships have come at the expense of the most vulnerable longtime property owners; and

WHEREAS, The researchers found that petitions were disproportionately filed against Black and Asian American property owners, and in areas at high risk of displacement due to rising real estate values; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has an obligation to protect the public welfare of its most vulnerable citizens and must explore ways to keep its citizens from being exploited; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Commerce & Economic Development is hereby authorized to hold hearings regarding the Abandoned and Blighted Property Conservatorship Act of Pennsylvania,