

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Safety to conduct hearings concerning the efficacy, public safety and economic impact of installing and maintaining a network of public emergency call boxes in high-crime areas of the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Studies show that the use of surveillance systems across the globe has resulted in significant decreases in crime and the visibility of cameras is associated with its impact on crime and disorder; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia routinely has the highest homicide rate among the nation's 10 largest cities; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, 60% of all violent crimes occurred in eight of Philadelphia's 22 police districts; and

WHEREAS, From the years of 2007 through 2011, homicide victims were 88% male, 80% black, 62% between the ages of 18 and 34, killed by gunshot 82% of the time, and killed outdoors 74% of the time; and

WHEREAS, Emergency call boxes are an integral component of public safety on a vast number of our nation's higher education campuses which experience a much lower crime rate than the rest of the nation; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Police Department's SafeCam Program-where Philadelphia businesses and residents voluntarily register their surveillance systems for police requests during investigation-boasts over 600 participants who have helped in 200 arrests in just two years; and

WHEREAS, Disaster was averted on May 16, 2013 at the SEPTA 56th Street Station, when a bystander used an emergency call box to notify authorities of an accident where a 14-month-old baby's stroller rolled off the platform and her mother and other passengers jumped onto the tracks to rescue the baby. A train at the preceding station was held by the dispatcher until all persons were safely on the platform; and

WHEREAS, Highly visible, brightly colored emergency phone towers exist with fixed and pan-tilt-zoom surveillance cameras, the ability to communicate with analog or VoIP emergency phones, direct connectivity to emergency services, "Help" buttons which activate the phone tower, and flashing lights upon activation may further divert crime and send emergency rescue to crime scenes faster; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the City of Philadelphia City Council Committee on Public Safety shall conduct hearings concerning the efficacy, public safety and economic impacts of installing and maintaining a network of public emergency call boxes in high-crime areas of the City.