

Legislation Text

File #: 220853, **Version:** 0

Encouraging the Law Department to file a lawsuit against the State of Pennsylvania seeking injunctive relief for their refusal to take custody of juveniles sentenced to state facilities who are currently housed at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC).

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC) is Philadelphia's only secure juvenile detention center; and

WHEREAS, PJJSC holds juveniles at the request of the Courts while they wait for their cases to be heard and decided; and

WHEREAS, Juveniles that have been sentenced to state correctional facilities remain at PJJSC before they are picked up by the State; and

WHEREAS, The State has not picked up over seventy juveniles sentenced to their facilities, leading to PJJSC surpassing its 180-person capacity limit; and

WHEREAS, PJJSC is currently facing staffing shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the unsafe working conditions within the facility, and the amount of overtime work required to compensate for the staffing shortage; and

WHEREAS, PJJSC employees that are currently working at the facility are taking on two-to-three sixteen-hour workdays a week; and

WHEREAS, The overcrowding of juveniles, coupled with severe understaffing at the facility, has led to dangerous conditions within PJJSC for both juveniles and employees; and

WHEREAS, Recently, in the midst of trying to break up a fight between two juveniles housed at the facility, twenty PJJSC employees, including Youth Detention Counselors, Supervisors, and Shift Managers, were injured. The police had to be called to PJJSC, and several staff and at least one resident had to be taken out of the facility by Emergency Medical Services personnel; and

WHEREAS, It is the responsibility of the State to take into their care the juveniles that have been put under their supervision by the Courts. Their refusal to do so continues to pose a significant threat to the safety of juveniles housed at the facility and facility staff; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby encourages the Law Department to file a lawsuit against the State of Pennsylvania seeking injunctive relief for their refusal to take custody of juveniles sentenced to state facilities who are currently housed at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC).