



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings to determine what efforts and resources can be implemented to improve the City's homicide clearance and conviction rates, and explore best practices nationwide in solving murders.

WHEREAS, A clearance rate is a term used in law enforcement to account for how many investigations, during a specific year, have resulted in an arrest, charge or prosecution; and

WHEREAS, According to the FBI's 2016 Uniformed Crime Report, the national clearance rate for homicides is 60%. Despite this national rate, the homicide clearance rate in Philadelphia has been consistently low in recent years, and has not been above the national average since 2013; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, Philadelphia's homicide clearance rate was 45%. That year, there were 277 homicides; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the City's homicide clearance rate declined to 42%. That year, a total of 315 murders occurred; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, the homicide clearance rate slightly improved to 44%, even though the homicide rate increased, with a total of 353 homicides occurring by the end of the year; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's murder rate continued to increase in 2019, with a record 356 homicides. To date, in 2020, there has been more homicides than there are days, and most are the result of gun violence; and

WHEREAS, Since 2017, 23 additional homicide detectives have been added to the PPD's homicide unit. However, Philadelphia's homicide clearance rate has consistently hovered around 40%-- meaning that 6 out of every 10 cases remain unsolved; and

WHEREAS, According to analysis of statistics done by the Washington Post using data from 55 cities across the United States, there are other major cities that, on average, have homicide clearance rates higher than Philadelphia's, including Chicago (74%), New Orleans (65%), Detroit (59%), Pittsburgh (53%) and Houston (51%); and

WHEREAS, According to an additional analysis of FBI data from 18 US cities done by TheTrace.org, law enforcement is less likely to make an arrest when a murder involves a firearm; and

WHEREAS, Effectiveness of solving murders is essential to public safety. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Philadelphia City Council's Committee on Public Safety to explore additional avenues, to ensure that the City's homicide clearance rate improves; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings to determine what efforts and

resources can be implemented to improve the City's homicide clearance and conviction rates, and explore best practices nationwide in solving murders.