

Legislation Text

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Authorizing Council's Committee on Public Safety to investigate and hold hearings on the impact of prioritizing prison space in secure facilities for violent offenders and offenders with illegal guns as a means of decreasing serious crimes while examining the efficiency and effectiveness of alternative means of housing non-violent and low risk offenders.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is confronted with an epidemic of violent crimes and a proliferation of illegal guns; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor, District Attorney and members of City Council have committed to reducing illegal guns and violent crimes by targeting such offenders for no bail or high bail; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Prison System currently operates six large facilities located along the State Road corridor with five satellite facilities throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, The total number of beds available in all facilities is 7,511; and

WHEREAS, Due to the current population levels in all facilities an additional 1,486 temporary beds are currently in use; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 49% of male inmates and 46% of female inmates are classified as violent offenders charged with crimes against persons; and

WHEREAS, The average daily cost to house an inmate in secure facilities is \$114.86 per inmate; and

WHEREAS, Additional space may be needed in secure detention facilities to hold violent offenders and offenders with illegal guns; and

WHEREAS, The five satellite facilities are designated for low risk inmates serving weekend and work release sentences; and

WHEREAS, There are non-violent, low risk offenders occupying space in secure facilities awaiting trial because they do not have the funds to post bail; and

WHEREAS, There are non-violent, low risk offenders serving county time in our secure facilities; and

WHEREAS, These offenders and the public may be better served by placing them in minimum security facilities or rigorous alternative pre-trial detention or sentencing programs; and

WHEREAS, The process for being assigned to alternative and special detention facilities is based on a set of criteria along with a recommendation from a Social Work Services Manager; and

WHEREAS, Inmates assigned to work release programs are mandated to pay 16% of their income towards

room and board which is projected to amount to \$145,000 in FY 2012; and

WHEREAS, Such efforts will aid police, prosecutors, judges and prison officials by creating space in secure facilities in which to hold violent offenders and offenders with illegal guns; and

WHEREAS, The availability of space in secure facilities may have an immediate and significant impact on reducing violent crimes and illegal guns on the street; therefore,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes Council's Committee on Public Safety to investigate and hold hearings on the impact of prioritizing prison space in secure facilities for violent offenders and offenders with illegal guns as a means of decreasing serious crimes while examining the efficiency and effectiveness of alternative means of housing non-violent and low risk offenders.