

Legislation Text

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Calling for the establishment of a "Philly Youth Act" to reduce gun violence and foster, coordinate, and promote peace treaties amongst our Philadelphia youths.

WHEREAS, Homicide is the second leading cause of deaths nationwide among young individuals, ages 15 to 19. in the City of Philadelphia, homicide is the number one leading cause of death amongst youths, as more young people become the perpetrators and the victims of gun violence; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 50% of Philadelphia's youths have witnessed gun violence and that the majority of shootings victims are young black men; and

WHEREAS, In the year 2020, there were more than 2,200 shooting victims in Philadelphia. Nearly half of those victims were young people between the ages of 10 to 24. Over a quarter of the City's 499 shooting fatalities were young individuals. About 15% of 887 of youth-involved in shootings resulted in fatalities; and

WHEREAS, The deadly violence that gripped Philadelphia in 2020 has carried over and bled into 2021. In the first month of 2021, the Philadelphia Police Department recorded 50 homicides, a 32 percent increase from last year and the deadliest in three decades; and

WHEREAS, As of April 14, 2021, the City has recorded over 540 shootings, a 40.4% increase from this time last year. The number of youth victims account for 37% of the total shootings. Out of the 207 youth involved-shootings that occurred, 40 were fatal; and

WHEREAS, The numerous stories of youths whose lives were tragically cut short as a result of gun violence is dominating the City's news headlines. One mother was left in disbelief as she grieved the death of her 15-year-old son, who was shot 17 times; and

WHEREAS, Our Philadelphia youths are under fire, hurting, and bleeding all over the City streets. The casualties of this gun violence and bloodshed include not just the victims, perpetrators, their families, loved ones, but the whole City of Philadelphia and those of us who proudly call Philadelphia home; and

WHEREAS, The time to act is now. A Philly Youth Act could create partnerships between stakeholders and agencies such as, the Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network, and juvenile probation and parole officers to help identify and enlist credible messengers to bridge the gap, create, and cultivate safe spaces to host peace treaty meetings; and

WHEREAS, During these peace treaty sessions, a mediator could be used to employ strategic and incentivized tactics, wherein the parties involved receive certain benefits if they can uphold and maintain the peace, and reduce youth-involved shooting activity, for a specified length of time; and

WHEREAS, The Philly Youth Act should include various incentives to encourage positive outcomes in which the parties to the peace treaties comply with and uphold the terms of agreements. The incentives may include

employment agreements, a reduction in probation, and an elimination of fines and fees that may be associated with their probation; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls for the enactment of the “Philly Youth Act” to help foster, facilitate, and promote peace treaties amongst our Philadelphia youth as a means of countermeasure against the rising incidents of youth-involved shootings in our City.