

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold hearings examining disparities experienced by the LGBTQ+ community and exploring solutions to achieving equity for LGBTQ+ Philadelphians.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has long been at a vanguard of LGBTQ+ protections, and major advancements in proactive LGBTQ+ legislation, executive action, and public and private funding for services nationally and locally have been made as a result of advocacy by revolutionary leaders who demanded equal treatment and justice; and

WHEREAS, Despite these substantial gains, inequities persist for LGBTQ+ people in access to quality and affordable housing, mental and physical health care and public health, fair treatment in the criminal justice system, education, and many other facets of life as a result of systemic discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community, which can contribute to poorer health and wellbeing overall; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ people face higher barriers to accessing and maintaining safe, stable, and affordable housing. Nationally, an estimated 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+. According to the Williams Institute, in Pennsylvania, 21% of Transgender people report having experienced some form of housing discrimination, such as being evicted from their home or denied a home or apartment because of being Transgender, and 10% reported that they experienced homelessness in the past year because of being Transgender; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience food insecurity. 26% of LGBTQ+ adults in Pennsylvania reported not having enough money for food in 2021 as compared to 13% of non-LGBTQ+ adults; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience workplace discrimination. Nearly half (47%) of LGBTQ+ respondents from Pennsylvania to a recent survey reported experiencing workplace discrimination or harassment because of their sexual orientation or gender identity at some point in their lives. More specifically, 17% of respondents from Pennsylvania reported experiencing employment discrimination (including being fired or not hired) because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and 46% percent of LGBTQ+ respondents from Pennsylvania reported experiencing at least one form of harassment (verbal, physical, or sexual harassment) at work because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ people face unique health challenges, a greater likelihood of having serious health needs, and reduced access to healthcare and insurance to meet those needs. One in three LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians believe most of their healthcare providers do not have the medical expertise to appropriately and accurately address their health needs as an LGBTQ+ person. LGBTQ+ people are likely to experience a healthcare provider who reacts poorly when they come out as LGBTQ+. Seven in ten LGBTQ+ Pennsylvanians have experienced a mental health challenge in the past year but only four of those seven are receiving mental health counseling or treatment; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ students are more likely to report being bullied at school and experience physical or

verbal assault and harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender expression. LGBTQ+ students are also less likely to report bullying or harassment to staff; and

WHEREAS, The extent to which these disparities exist in these socioeconomic indicators and many others evidence the need for continued investigation of the data as well as conversation centering the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people in Philadelphia, to inform an exploration of the causes and potential solutions to the inequities facing LGBTQ+ people in Philadelphia, which are exacerbated at the intersection of race, income, gender, and other factors; and

WHEREAS, the City of Philadelphia manages a vast range of services; stewards local, state and federal funds; and partners with community-based organizations that are designed to serve vulnerable residents including LGBTQ+ people and their families, and this conversation must include an assessment of these services and the extent to which they are equitably serving LGBTQ+ people; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby authorize the Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold hearings examining disparities experienced by the LGBTQ+ community and exploring solutions to achieving equity for LGBTQ+ Philadelphians.