

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Joint Committees on Law and Government and Public Safety to hold hearings to investigate how the various agencies that comprise the Criminal Justice System in Philadelphia can better operate, collaborate and cooperate in an effort to increase efficiencies and reduce costs in order to lessen the burden on City taxpayers.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia spends seven cents out of every tax dollar on holding people in its jails while the Criminal Justice agencies consume more than 50 percent of the budget; and

WHEREAS, The Prison's budget has more than doubled in the past 10 years with more than one out of every two City employees being employed in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Increased spending in prisons is associated with a rising number of inmates. This is not in correlation with crime rates. As prison population numbers were rising, crime rate/arrests were declining; and

WHEREAS, It costs approximately \$95 per day to keep someone in a Philadelphia jail and the rise in population from 1999 through 2008 was not related to convicted criminals; rather it was related to the pretrial population; and

WHEREAS, The percentage of bed-days in the Philadelphia jails consumed by pretrial inmates on an annual basis rose from 44 percent of the total to 57 percent; and

WHEREAS, Bail is set following the guidelines in only about half of the cases. Higher bail and more people being ordered to post it have driven up the number of people in jail; and

WHEREAS, Overcrowding is managed by paying other counties to house inmates in their jails and in some facilities triple celling, which is currently the subject of a pending civil rights lawsuit against the City; and

WHEREAS, There could be substantial economic benefits for the City of Philadelphia to investigate cost saving methods for the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia can maximize the benefit to the taxpaying citizens of Philadelphia by integrating cost saving methods in the criminal justice system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby authorize the Joint Committees on Law and Government and Public Safety to hold hearings to investigate how the various agencies that comprise the Criminal Justice System in Philadelphia can better operate, collaborate and cooperate in an effort to increase efficiencies and reduce costs in order to lessen the burden on City taxpayers.