

Legislation Text

File #: 180357, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Committee on Law and Government to hold hearings regarding the use of THC screenings for people on probation or parole in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia decriminalized the possession and use of small amounts of marijuana in October of 2014; and

WHEREAS, Individuals under state supervision are required to submit to regular drug screenings using a urine stick test that detects several substances, including tetrahydrocannabinol ("THC"), the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis; and

WHEREAS, Those on probation or parole who test positive on the THC portion of the screening can be found to be in violation of the conditions of their supervision; and

WHEREAS, If found by a Judge to have violated the conditions of their supervision, an individual can be incarcerated or ordered into a drug treatment program at the discretion of the Judge; and

WHEREAS, The typical cost to Philadelphia taxpayers for holding someone behind bars is \$42,000 per year, and sending people to jail runs counter to the City's stated goal of reducing the prison population; and

WHEREAS, City drug treatment programs are also administered at a cost to taxpayers, like in 2014, when more than twenty percent of that year's 8,363 treatment admissions, on which Philadelphia spent \$28 million, were court-ordered; and

WHEREAS, Marijuana users take up spaces in treatment that could otherwise go to people waiting for beds while struggling with heroin addiction, limiting the City's ability to alleviate this crisis at a time when overdoses and deaths are skyrocketing; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby authorize the Committee on Law and Government to hold hearings regarding the use of THC screenings for people on probation or parole in Philadelphia.