

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing Council's Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold public hearings for the purpose of examining existing programs and services available to at-risk adolescent girls; examining methods of continuing and strengthening such programs and developing new programs; and exploring potential sources of funding, in order to encourage young women to follow pathways that lead to the completion of their educations, economic independence and good citizenship.

WHEREAS, Adolescence is a transitional and formative period during which teenagers are subject to numerous peer demands and pressures; some of which unfortunately, may result in unhealthy behaviors that could have a permanent negative impact upon a teenager's life; and

WHEREAS, Such unhealthy influences and behaviors pose a threat to not only young men but to young women as well, resulting too often in teen pregnancy and motherhood, dropping out of high school, female headed one parent households, and lifelong and generational unemployment, low wages, poverty and dependency on public support services; and

WHEREAS, Girls are dropping out of high school at unacceptably high rates, with an overall drop out rate for all girls at 25 percent, and young women of color having the highest drop out rate, with 50 percent of Native American female students, 40 percent of African American female students and 40 percent of Hispanic female students failing to graduate high school each year; and

WHEREAS, Studies show that some of the barriers to high school graduation for young women are teen pregnancy, parenting responsibilities, inadequate support programs within the schools for pregnant teens and parents, poor attendance, and inability to keep up with studies; and

WHEREAS, Compounding this problem is the alarming increase in female adolescent aggressive and violent behavior, both physical and emotional, which manifests itself in schools as well as in our communities; and

WHEREAS, Some at-risk young women are juvenile offenders and under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system greatly need quality programming and assistance geared specifically to young women; and

WHEREAS, Programs that have addressed many of the problems unique to at-risk young women include Girl's Track Program, Teen Shop, Nu Sigma Youth Services, Philadelphia Anti-Drug Anti Violence Network and Philadelphia Physicians for Social Responsibility; and

WHEREAS, Providing adequate services to young women that assist them to complete their educations, join productive extracurricular and recreational activities, and encourage community involvement is essential to their future success as individuals and as productive citizens of the City; and

WHEREAS, Governments also benefit when young women are engaged in productive pursuits, as such pursuits are likely to result in higher employment rates and increased earnings which ultimately lead to more tax revenues for the government and less dependency on public support programs; and

WHEREAS, It is crucial for the future of young women in the City of Philadelphia that programs for at-risk girls be continued and adequately funded so that young women are provided with the tools necessary to prepare them academically and socially to enter a workforce where they can earn salaries that will provide them with economic security; now, therefore be it,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council's Committee on Public Health and Human Services is hereby authorized to hold public hearings for the purpose of examining existing programs and services available to at-risk adolescent girls; examining methods of continuing and strengthening such programs and developing new programs; and exploring potential sources of funding, in order to encourage young women to follow pathways that lead to the completion of their educations, economic independence and good citizenship.