

Legislation Text

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March 22, 2023

TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA:

I am hereby returning as disapproved Bill Number 230106, which was passed by Council at its session on March 9, 2023. Bill Number 230106 would provide for submission to the qualified electors of the City of Philadelphia an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to establish the Office of the Chief Public Safety Director to be responsible for ensuring public safety by coordinating the resources (personnel and employment, property, and equipment) within the departments of Police, Prisons, Recreation, and all other relevant City agencies.

My Administration agrees that the safety of all Philadelphians is of the utmost importance. However, we do not feel a Charter change of this magnitude with highly specific provisions about qualifications, compensation, and impacted Departments should be moved forward on such an expedited timeline. My Administration believes it would be a mistake to implement the Charter change without the ability to be fully considered in the context of the City's existing governance and management structure and researched and evaluated as to its potential effectiveness in achieving the expressed goals.

Currently, the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter outlines that the Managing Director is responsible for many of the duties and functions proposed for the Office of the Chief Public Safety Director. Additionally, the Public Safety cluster of the Managing Director's Office already streamlines collaboration among our public safety agencies. Adding this position with very similar duties and responsibilities, without careful consideration could create the opposite of the intended effect and lead to a more complicated reporting structure, actually decreasing clear lines of authority and accountability.

Furthermore, my Administration does not feel that City Council has done the necessary due diligence to fully assess whether this is an effective tool for this Administration and future Administrations to ensure the safety of all Philadelphians. Therefore, I am returning as disapproved Bill Number 230106.

Respectfully,
JAMES F. KENNEY
Mayor