

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings to examine street harassment in the City of Philadelphia, particularly the strategies and campaigns of the non-profit group Hollaback!, which works to bring attention to the issue on behalf of women and LGBTQ individuals of all ages.

WHEREAS, Started in 2005, Hollaback! is an international organization of young men and women who believe in building communities where everyone feels comfortable, safe, and respected, particularly on the street; and

WHEREAS, The organization encourages victims of street harassment to “Hollaback,” or acknowledging the behavior as harassment that will not be tolerated, and encouraging bystanders to intervene when faced with unwelcome comments, groping and more. Its website allows community members to use the internet and mobile devices to share their stories of street harassment, upload videos and photos of harassment, geolocate exactly where they are being harassed on an interactive map, and donate to the cause. By collecting and sharing victims’ stories and pictures in a safe way, Hollaback! is breaking the silence that perpetuates sexual aggression; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, more than 25 percent of women have been sexually harassed or assaulted before the age of 18. Hollaback’s Philadelphia branch is an essential program that combines various efforts to end street harassment and the intimidation and shame it creates. The group forms partnerships with other organizations, conducted interviews, school workshops, and various local campaigns, all to stop street harassment. It has started its own comic book, blog, and SEPTA advertisement campaign. It draws attention to offensive billboards, hold screenings and panel discussions about human trafficking, and conduct interviews with young girls about street harassment that get posted monthly on their website; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia’s public safety apparatus is charged with maintaining a safe environment for its citizens. This public hearing will examine their efforts and successes in combating street harassment, and aims to find areas of cooperation and resource-sharing with external organizations focused on the same mission, like Hollaback!; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Public Safety is hereby authorized to hold public hearings to examine street harassment in the City of Philadelphia, particularly the strategies and campaigns of the non-profit group Hollaback!, which works to bring attention to the issue on behalf of women and LGBTQ individuals of all ages.