

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing City Council's Committee on Public Safety and the Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention to Hold Hearings Regarding Relocating Victims Who Are Targets of Deadly Violence and Determining How the \$500,000 Appropriated for their Relocation was Utilized.

WHEREAS, Effective witness testimony is often a vital part of the prosecution's case to secure a conviction in criminal cases; and

WHEREAS, If key witnesses are to be available and willing to testify at important criminal cases, they must feel assured that they can and will be protected; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia must have a fully functional witness protection program to ensure the safety of those witnesses that are willing to come forward and testify in criminal cases; and

WHEREAS, In 2021, it was made aware to City Council that numerous threats were being made toward mothers of children who cooperated in homicide investigations including a mother whose front door was found to have numerous bullet holes; and

WHEREAS, Councilmember Oh urged Council to provide funds for the immediate relocation and protection of these families and other victims like them; and

WHEREAS, In response to Oh's request, Council approved a midyear FY2021-22 budget ordinance which included \$500,000 to be spent to safely relocate the witnesses being targeted; and

WHEREAS, This \$500,000 was to be specifically used to safely relocate families who have been targets of violence due to their cooperation with law enforcement in the investigation of murders and the prosecutions of accused killers; and

WHEREAS, However, the \$500,000 directed to the Managing Director's Office Public Safety Unit has not been used to relocate any of these families to this date; and

WHEREAS, These families continue to experience threats of deadly violence in their immediate neighborhoods and have awaited their relocation for over two years amid an increasing City-wide homicide crisis; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has a responsibility to protect these individuals who are being targeted; and

WHEREAS, The public must be informed about why these individuals need to be relocated as a result of the City's failed response to protect them; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes City Council's Committee on Public Safety and the Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention to hold hearings

regarding relocating victims who are targets of deadly violence and determining how the \$500,000 appropriated for their relocation was utilized.