

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on People with Disabilities & Special Needs to hold hearings regarding the consequences of potential additional cuts by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania General Assembly to mental health services, especially those offered in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The coronavirus pandemic is pushing America into a mental health crisis, with daily instances of death, isolation and fear, in addition to economic precarity and housing security, among other related issues, generating widespread psychological trauma; and

WHEREAS, The state of mental health services in Pennsylvania was already precarious due to a persistent lack of federal and state government financing; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, during the administration of then-Governor Tom Corbett, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania cut \$84 million to counties for programs that serve people with intellectual disability, mental health challenges, and related needs, all unprotected by federal requirements - funding that has never been restored; and

WHEREAS, At the beginning of 2020, prior to COVID-19 being declared a pandemic, county officials statewide urged lawmakers to provide \$42 million more than proposed, with three percent (3%) annual increases to achieve sustainability funding trajectory; and

WHEREAS, Because of the deadly, disastrous national leadership of the Trump administration, the ongoing pandemic, and the persistent economic downturn they cause leave Pennsylvania state government looking at up to \$5 billion deficit at the end of this fiscal year, with no relief in sight due to opposition from the Republic-controlled U.S. Senate (although they have received several bills from the U.S. House of Representatives that would fund additional relief, including to individuals and municipal governments); and

WHEREAS, In the absence of fully safe economic activity or certainty about federal support, the General Assembly and Governor Wolf in June reached a partial compromise budget for this fiscal year, providing a full year's funding to most education lines, but only other items for only five months; and

WHEREAS, Among the programs that still require yearlong funding are Medicaid programs that cost hundreds of millions of dollars and smaller ones that benefit the homeless and survivors of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, A decade of flat funding or cuts have already led some counties to reduce services, such as crisis services, mental health job training programs, and drop-in centers; and

WHEREAS, We are already far removed from the just and equitable access to mental health services that every Philadelphian - as every Pennsylvanian, and American - ought to have, and more budget cuts from the Commonwealth will further imperil people's lives and exacerbate social inequalities; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,** That Council does hereby authorize

the Committee on People with Disabilities & Special Needs to hold regarding the consequences of potential additional cuts by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania General Assembly to mental health services, especially those offered in the City of Philadelphia.