

Legislation Text

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Requesting that the City Council President Anna C. Verna and Mayor John F. Street officially request the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority to affirmatively review capital dollars which were borrowed in 1992 and remain unspent and to evaluate whether these funds can be re-allocated to fully support the purchase of new voting machines for the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The need to replace the City's outdated and cumbersome mechanical lever voting machines with new electronic voting machines has been documented in the 1995 City of Philadelphia Election Reform Task Force Final Report and in the Council Committee on Law and Government Committee Report on Resolution No. 960894; and

WHEREAS, On November 3, 1998, the electorate of the City of Philadelphia overwhelmingly approved a referendum by a vote of 149,573 to 43,699 which authorized the City to procure new electronic voting machines; and

WHEREAS, This affirmative vote by the electorate triggers a state statutory requirement that the new voting system be fully implemented within 103 weeks after the approval of the referendum (see, 25 P.S. 3031.4 (b)); and

WHEREAS, During the summer of 1999, the procurement process was initiated and a Request for Proposals was issued to voting machine vendors; and

WHEREAS, The cost to purchase 3,500 electronic voting machines is projected to be \$21 million and this funding has been proposed by the City Administration in the FY 2001 capital budget; and

WHEREAS, In 1992, the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority ("PICA") borrowed funds, on the City's behalf, to pay for various emergency capital projects; and

WHEREAS, During the November 12, 1997 public hearing before the Council Committee on Law and Government which assessed the need for new electronic voting machines, Mr. Joseph C. Vignola -- the executive director of PICA -- testified that some of these borrowed funds remain unspent; and

WHEREAS, At this same public hearing, Mr. Vignola also stated that if an official request was made by City Council and the City Administration, PICA would affirmatively review these unspent capital dollars and advise whether these dollars could be re-allocated to support the purchase of new voting machines; and

WHEREAS, Subsequent to the Council Committee on Law and Government public hearing, Mr. Vignola sent a letter dated December 3, 1997 confirming that PICA's capital funds could be used for the acquisition of new voting machines and that approximately \$15 million was available for this project; and

WHEREAS, On December 11, 1997, City Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 970844 which requested that the Mayor and Council President make this official request; and

WHEREAS, No apparent affirmative action was taken at that time by the Mayor and Council President; and

WHEREAS, Given the current and future constraints on the City's capital budget, it is imperative that all available funding sources be fully explored in order to meet the many important capital needs of the City; now therefore

Resolved, By the Council of the City of Philadelphia, That the City Council President Anna C. Verna and Mayor John F. Street officially request the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority to affirmatively review capital dollars which were borrowed in 1992 and remain unspent and to evaluate whether these funds can be re-allocated to fully support the purchase of new voting machines for the City of Philadelphia.