



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 130735, Version: 0

Calling for joint hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless to explore methods of detecting and mitigating subtle forms of discrimination that create barriers to minority renters and homebuyers in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, On June 11, 2013, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (H.U.D), in collaboration with the Urban Institute, released the findings of their 2012 Housing Discrimination Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities study (the Study); and

WHEREAS, The Study found that blatant forms of discrimination within the homeownership and rental markets have declined. However, more subtle forms of discrimination persist. The study measured the degree to which African American, Hispanic, and Asian renters and home buyers are informed about housing options and shown housing units in comparison to equally qualified Caucasians; and

WHEREAS, As it relates to home buyers, nationally, there is no marked disparity between Hispanics and Caucasians; however, African Americans were shown 17.7% fewer housing units than equally qualified Caucasians, and Asians were shown 18.8% fewer housing units than equally qualified Caucasians; and

WHEREAS, Subtle discrimination significantly impacts ethnic and racial minorities by limiting their rental and home buying options, increasing the move in costs and the time investment in property searches. Limiting housing options and withholding financial information from minorities, are examples of modern day segregation, and redlining; and

WHEREAS, The results for Philadelphia are incredibly alarming; the City tested above the national average for having rental agents who show African Americans fewer apartment units, than equally qualified Caucasians. Philadelphia also tested above the national average for having rental agents who do not tell African Americans about available rental units for which they are qualified; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, African American renters pay about 25% higher costs than Caucasians. On average, security deposits for African Americans are \$115 higher than equally qualified Caucasians, and African Americans pay \$425 higher move-in costs than Caucasian renters; and

WHEREAS, The results of the study are an understatement, because discrimination towards minority renters and home buyers will increase for financially unstable minorities for which the Study did not address; and

WHEREAS, The Study was unable to assess other forms of subtle discrimination perpetuated through advertising, rental and home application processing, mortgage financing, and leasing negotiations. For example, rental agents who advertise their properties using only Caucasian families may suggest that minorities are not welcome. Also when applications are processed differently, for reasons such as the ethnicity of an applicant's name, subtle discrimination is a likely factor; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council hereby authorizes joint

hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless Committee to explore methods of detecting and mitigating subtle forms of discrimination that create barriers to minority renters and homebuyers in Philadelphia.