

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings regarding creation of a program of voluntary public service work to be included as an alternative to criminal sentences.

WHEREAS, Many persons who commit low level nonviolent crimes are living in poverty with little to no prospects for employment; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania state courts have long recognized that alternatives to prison sentences or probation supervision, such as Drug Courts, Veterans Court and youthful offender programs, are often a more appropriate vehicle to rehabilitate low level nonviolent offenders; and

WHEREAS, Programs that connect offenders with community service work combined with social services that provide assistance in obtaining housing, behavioral health and other supports are an effective way to turn low level offenders into contributing members of society; and

WHEREAS, Providing an opportunity to gain work skills through public service is an essential tool to assist low level offenders in gainful employment after completion of the program, lifting them out of the cycle of poverty and incarceration; and

WHEREAS, It is prudent for Council to explore the avenues for inclusion of voluntary public service as an alternative sentencing program; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby authorize the Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings regarding public service as part of an alternative sentencing scheme.