

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Labor and Civil Service to hold public hearings to investigate the decisions made by the Philadelphia Fire Department and the Department of Licenses and Inspections before and during a fire on April 9, 2012 in the Kensington section of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The Committee on Labor and Civil Service is responsible for proper oversight over all operating departments to ensure the health and safety of all City employees. It is committed to ensuring the adequacy of employee safety policies and procedures, including those of the Philadelphia Fire Department in light of the fatal five-alarm fire its firefighters successfully extinguished at a vacant warehouse in Kensington on April 9, 2012; and

WHEREAS, One Fire Lieutenant, Robert Neary, and one Firefighter, Daniel Sweeney, were killed in the April 9, 2012 fire at the former Thomas W. Buck Hosiery at York and Jasper Streets in the Kensington section of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is the U.S. Federal agency that conducts research and makes recommendations to prevent worker injury and illness; and

WHEREAS, NIOSH has delivered a preliminary report to the Fire Department outlining several of their findings, specifically that License and Inspections (L&I) issued nine violations on the property, and they were notified of drug-dealing and prostitution happening at the site. Also, L&I was notified that at some point there were 65 people reported to be living in the building prior to the fire; and

WHEREAS, NIOSH gave the building its second worst fire risk rating, saying “Critical - may cause severe personnel injury, possible death”; and

WHEREAS, NIOSH found that although a collapse zone was established, the four firefighters were not ordered out of the area, and the wall that eventually collapsed was not recognized as a prominent safety hazard; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Labor and Civil Service is hereby authorized to hold public hearings to investigate the decisions made by the Philadelphia Fire Department and the Department of Licenses and Inspections before and during a fire on April 9, 2012 in the Kensington section of Philadelphia.