



Legislation Details

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TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBER OF
CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA:

I am returning herewith, unsigned, Bills 020482 and 020484. Council passed these bills at it session on October 2, 2002.

These measures would make changes and additions to the Philadelphia Code regarding Educational Housing Districts. The original legislation creating the regulations for Educational Housing Districts was passed by City Council last spring - the legislation outlined various requirements and prohibitions relating to students living within established "Educational Housing Districts," and placed additional burdens on the universities where those students reside. The Administration opposed the original legislation, objecting to its vicarious liability for colleges and universities, and emphasizing that if the legislation were to become law, it would stifle the important efforts made by the City, in partnership with members of the business community and representatives from local universities, to retain those students who call Philadelphia home during their college years. Further it was my position that enforcing existing laws and regulations can go a long way towards solving many of the problems the bill was designed to address.

The tow bills being returned today do address some of my Administration's original concerns with the initial legislation - specifically, Bill 020482 removes the vicarious liability provisions that would have placed the responsibility for student misconduct upon the student's university. However, the bills continue to place a disproportionate and excessive burden on the universities, the landlords that rent to students and the City. I continue to believe that enforcement of existing measures can help to address many of the problems created by disruptive students.

Enforcement of these measures is a problem. It is not clear how some of the requirements placed upon the universities and the City are to be carried out in a practical and efficient manner. For example, under Bill 020482, schools within the District would have to be notified presumably by the City of any quality-of-life violations - including parking violations - by their students. Under the original ordinance, a student subject to the rules and regulations of an Educational Housing District would have been required to place an identifying sticker on his or her vehicle, making it easier for an officer to recognize and report any violations by such student to the corresponding university. However, according to Bill 020482, the identifying sticker must now be placed on the student's identification card, which presumably the student carries on his or her person - not affixed to a vehicle. Therefore, it is not clear under the legislation, how an officer issuing a violation to a vehicle is to know that the vehicle is a student vehicle and the reporting requirements of Bill 020482 apply. Without that information, the enforcement scheme breaks down completely.

This is just one example of the potential confusion caused by the provisions of these bills. Further, I cannot support placing undue and significant burdens upon the universities and on landlords renting to students - some of whom are very likely small business owners who may not have the capability to deal with extraordinary measures required within these two bills.

Again, allow me to emphasize that it is not my intention to minimize the concerns that have been raised by neighborhood residents who feel that the student population has negatively affected their

quality of life in Philadelphia. Without question, quality of life in our neighborhoods is a central issue for this Administration. All residents - whether they are a student or not - have a responsibility to be good neighbors and respectful of those with whom they share the community. However, reaching practical solutions that allow both our City's long-term residents and our student population to live together with some degree of harmony without imposing severe restrictions on our visiting students is critical, to our long-term success as a vibrant, diverse city.

I ask that the Sponsor of these measures join with the members of the Managing Director's office and other members of my Administration to develop methods that will allow both students and long time residents to live together and to enjoy all that our wonderful City has to offer, rather than to seek to impose the confusing and restrictive requirements detailed in these two bills.

Sincerely,

John F. Street, Esquire
Mayor, City of Philadelphia

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