

Legislation Text

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Authorizing City Council's Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold public hearings to evaluate Philadelphia International Airport's current resources for international travelers and explore current trends and opportunities to improve these services to improve our City's international image.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) is one of the largest economic engines in Pennsylvania, generating \$14 billion annually into the local economy; and

WHEREAS, Currently, PHL is the tenth-busiest airport in the United States in terms of annual takeoff and landings. In 2008, PHL accommodated 31.8 million passengers, including 4 million international passengers; and

WHEREAS, PHL offers flights to approximately forty (40) international destinations, and earlier this year USAirways announced PHL's first-ever direct service to South America. In Spring 2010, USAirways is expected to initiate nonstop service to Beijing, China; and

WHEREAS, As Philadelphia continues to emerge as a world-class city, special attention should be paid to our welcoming services and resources at the Airport; and

WHEREAS, With visitors coming from around the world, PHL should be able to accommodate travelers with information about hotels, restaurants, transportation, weather, landmarks, entertainment, and general travel needs; and

WHEREAS, Currently, PHL has Passenger Assistance staff assigned to greet the international flights. The staff is primarily bilingual and is comprised of full-time City employees and student Bilingual Receptionists; and

WHEREAS, Passengers also have access to several hundred white courtesy phones located throughout the Airport with numbers posted for French, German, and Spanish. There is also a language line through the Communications Center and is available for over 100 languages; and

WHEREAS, While the Airport does offer language services for passengers, improving the overall accessibility and information may improve passenger experiences and enhance the City's global image; and

WHEREAS, Other airports have begun improving the customer experience by expanding their information kiosk repertoire to include virtual concierge service to welcome passengers and provide information, in multiple languages, at the touch of a fingertip; and

WHEREAS, Chicago Airport System has introduced Virtual Concierge kiosks in their baggage claim areas at O'Hare International Airport. These multilingual, touch-screen kiosks provide a welcome message from Mayor Richard M. Daley, hotel, transportation, and airport information in eight languages, including flight status and weather updates, and information on Chicago events and attractions. Travelers simply touch the screens to place a free-of-charge call to make a hotel reservation <<http://www.ifly.com/>>, order a rental car or talk with an airport Customer Service Representative. This new technology serves as a primary source of information about

O'Hare and Chicago by helping passengers make travel arrangements <<http://www.ifly.com/>>by putting relevant information at their fingertips; and

WHEREAS, While PHL already takes the initiative to welcome both domestic and international passengers, elevating our overall customer service approach would benefit both the Airport and the City; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council's Committee on Legislative Oversight is authorized to hold public hearings to evaluate Philadelphia International Airport's current resources for international travelers and explore current trends and opportunities to improve these services to improve our City's international image.