



Legislation Text

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Authorizing City Council's Joint Committees on Public Safety and Public Health to hold hearings to examine Philadelphia's black homicide victimization rate.

WHEREAS, In January, 2014, the Violence Policy Center published a study analyzing nationwide homicide data and ranking states according to the prevalence of black homicide victimization; and

WHEREAS, Using Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) data for 2011, the most recent available national data, the Violence Policy Center has published an annual report on the black homicide victimization rate; and

WHEREAS, The report characterizes the nationwide black homicide victimization rate as an epidemic with 6,309 black homicide victims in 2011; and

WHEREAS, The report highlights the drastic difference between the homicide rate among black victims, 17.51 per 100,000, and the overall national homicide rate, 4.44 per 100,000. The homicide rate among black males is even more alarming at 31.67 per 100,000 compared to the overall male rate of 7.13 per 100,000; and

WHEREAS, The VPC reports that blacks accounted for 50% of the nation's homicide victims despite comprising only 13% of the population, and that 82% of black homicide victims died from gunshots; and

WHEREAS, This nationwide epidemic has a particularly large impact on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which ranks 4th in the nation for the black homicide victims with 419 in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's homicide rate among black victims was 29.02 per 100,000 in 2011, far exceeding the national homicide rate among all victims and even the national homicide rate among black victims, with 85% of the victims dying from gunshots. Pennsylvania had 150 percent more African-American homicides than the national average; and

WHEREAS, This epidemic is especially prevalent in Philadelphia, where African-Americans make up less than half of the City of Philadelphia's population but represent over three quarters of its alleged homicide victims; and

WHEREAS, The Violence Policy Center concludes that addressing black homicide victimization is central to addressing gun violence in America and any discussion must focus on reducing exposure to firearms; and

WHEREAS, In order to address the overall issue of gun violence, the City of Philadelphia must find ways to reduce the number of African-Americans falling victim to gun related homicides; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the City Council's Joint Committees on Public Safety and Public Health is hereby authorized to hold hearings to examine Philadelphia's black homicide victimization rate.

