

Legislation Text

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Authorizing Council's Committee on the Disabled and Special Needs to hold public hearings regarding the state of educational opportunities and career development in Philadelphia for people with physical, psychiatric, sensory, intellectual and developmental disabilities.

WHEREAS, According to the 2010 Census, 56.7 million people, almost 20% of the United States population reported having a disability; and

WHEREAS, The 2012 American Community Survey estimated 28% of non-institutionalized individuals' ages 21 to 64 years with a disability were living below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, Educational attainment, especially post-secondary education, is directly linked with workforce participation, however rates of educational attainment are significantly lower for those with disabilities when compared to their non-disabled peers; and

WHEREAS, The 2012 American Community Survey estimated that 22% of non-institutionalized individuals' ages 21 to 64 years with a disability obtained less than a high school education and 34% had a high school diploma or equivalent; and

WHEREAS, The Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that only 32% of working-age people with disabilities were in the labor force in 2012, compared to 78% of the general population; and

WHEREAS, According to the BLS, half of those with a disability who are unemployed report significant barriers to employment, including: lack of education, training, transportation, and the need for accommodations and access; and

WHEREAS, Efforts to reduce environmental barriers to increase educational attainment among individuals with disabilities is evidenced by legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to children with disabilities through age 21; and

WHEREAS, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also includes protections to ensure educational attainment among individuals with disabilities and Title I of the ADA that prohibits discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training; and

WHEREAS, In addition legislation that seeks to improve educational and employment outcomes, other solutions include: programs such as supported education and supported employment, vocational rehabilitation and training, tax incentives for employers, and more recently mandates that a certain percentage of the workforce must be comprised of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Despite these efforts more needs to be done to create supports for individuals with disabilities so

educational and career pathways are created and meaningful participation among those with disabilities begins to more closely parallel those without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Educational attainment and gainful employment are crucial for an individual's ability to live meaningful, productive and independent lives, while reducing reliance on the public system, disability income and overuse of healthcare resources and by decreasing negative outcomes such as homelessness; and

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on the Disabled and Special Needs is hereby authorized to hold public hearings regarding the state of educational opportunities and career development in Philadelphia for people with physical, psychiatric, sensory, intellectual and developmental disabilities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That in furtherance of such investigation, the Committee is hereby authorized to issue subpoenas as may be necessary or appropriate to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents to the full extent authorized under Section 2-401 of The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter.