

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings examining the City services made available to families that are victims of homicide.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has recorded over 1,000 shooting victims during both 2014 and 2015, including 248 and 280 murders in these years respectively; and

WHEREAS, Gun violence greatly affects the lives and livelihoods of not only the victims but also their families, friends, and neighbors. Many experts in the mental response to crime victimization label these individuals "co-victims" in order to stress that fact; and

WHEREAS, In a report issued by the National Center for Victims of Crime, homicide-grief expert Lu Redmond has estimated that each victim has 7-10 close relatives not including friends, neighbors, and other loved-ones. This means that over 10,000 Philadelphians every year would be classified as "co-victims" who share in the trauma of gun violence; and

WHEREAS, "Co-victims" of gun violence often face mental trauma that is unique and directly related to their experience with gun violence, according to a report issued by the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime in 2001; and

WHEREAS, Widespread violence within one's neighborhood, sometimes called "community violence", has been shown by the University of Chicago's Dr. Dexter Voisin to cause increases in aggression, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress; and

WHEREAS, Managing the unique issues that gun violence victims and co-victims face as a result of their trauma - especially post-traumatic stress reactions - requires access to social services and mental health experts who are trained for such cases; and

WHEREAS, Young people, who often have not developed the proper coping mechanisms for handling these types of mental stressors, are among the most likely groups to be the victims and co-victims of gun violence according to the Universal Crime Report's statistics on gun violence victimization; and

WHEREAS, Mental stress caused by gun violence, if not mitigated by appropriate social services and personal interventions, has the potential to result in retaliatory violence and the perpetuation of other problem behaviors; now, therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Philadelphia City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings examining the City services that are made available to families that are victims of homicide.