



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing Council's Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings on health delivery services for the deaf and hearing impaired in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia, through its Fair Practices Ordinance, is committed to treating all people fairly without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, and familial status, in housing, employment and public accommodations; and

WHEREAS, Deaf patients, as described in the May 16, 2016 *Philadelphia Daily News* article by Ronnie Polaneczky entitled "Vital Signs For Life" can find themselves in life-threatening situations when emergency and other medical personnel do not know sign language; and

WHEREAS, Laura Welsh, was a nursing student when she watched a terrifying scenario unfold when a deaf patient was wheeled into the Emergency Room facing an emergency C-section and no one could explain to the woman what was going on before she was whisked to the Operating Room. While the outcome was ultimately positive for both mother and child, Welsh could not forget the emotional trauma that the patient endured. As a result of this experience Welsh created a book of flash cards to help communicate with deaf patients during medical emergencies; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Association of the Deaf, healthcare access is routinely out of reach for the deaf and hard of hearing due to communication and linguistic barriers. While deaf and hard of hearing people comprise about 37.5 million Americans aged 18 or older, most health care providers do not have adequate communication access to American Sign Language (ASL) or any other sign language through qualified interpreters; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is a City with world-class medical institutions and health care providers and as such should be a leader in assuring access to effective health care, especially in emergencies, for all people and particularly deaf patients, now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes Council's Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings on health delivery services for the deaf and hearing impaired in the City of Philadelphia.