

Legislation Text

File #: 171137, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings examining the emerging trend of gang recruitment through social media, and the impact it has on “corner wars” occurring across many Philadelphia neighborhoods.

WHEREAS, To date, there have been 300 homicides and well over 1,000 shootings that have occurred in 2017 throughout the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In 2016, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency released a report detailing an increase in gang activity in Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs from 2009-2013. The report identified 169 gangs, representing a 76% increase over the course of those four years. The Agency linked the increase in gangs to the high-level of availability of heroin and PCP in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the years, the City has continued to suffer from several instances of violent shootings and murders resulting from gang-related turf wars; and

WHEREAS, In October of 2017, the U.S. Attorney’s Office charged 13 men who participated in a 2013 shootout that occurred over drug turf near West Mill Creek Playground in West Philadelphia. Gun fire erupted when a member of the “Pit” gang, which ran their drug operation just south of the playground, decided that he would take over the territory of the “Grounds” gang, who sold drugs inside of the playground. The shooting left one gang member dead, and four other gang members and one innocent bystander injured; and

WHEREAS, In April of 2016, the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office charged 15 suspected gang members with committing 13 violent crimes that originated from a turf war in North Philadelphia between February and June of 2014. The crimes included nine shootings and one homicide; and

WHEREAS, An emerging trend has been the use of social media to recruit gang members or to lease drug turf to other gangs when members of the gang become unavailable due to incarceration; and

WHEREAS, With an increase in shootings and murders in 2017, it is imperative that the City publicly examines how many of these incidents were gang-related, whether these incidents were aggravated by the use of social media, and what programs can be implemented to stop turf wars; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings examining the emerging trend of gang recruitment through social media, and the impact it has on “corner wars” occurring across many Philadelphia neighborhoods.