

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing Philadelphia to officially join the National Stepping Up Initiative, which focuses on reducing the number of individuals with mental illnesses in jail in counties across the country.

WHEREAS, Counties routinely provide treatment services to the estimated 2 million people across the country with serious mental illnesses that are incarcerated each year. Prevalence rates of serious mental illnesses in jails are three to six times higher than for the general public. Almost three-quarters of adults with serious mental illnesses in jails have co-occurring substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, Adults with mental illnesses tend to stay longer in jail and, upon release, are at a higher risk of recidivism than people without these disorders. County jails spend two to three times more on adults with mental illnesses that require interventions compared to those without these treatment needs; and

WHEREAS, Without the appropriate treatment and services, people with mental illnesses continue to cycle through the criminal justice system, often resulting in tragic outcomes for these individuals and their families; and

WHEREAS, The Stepping Up Initiative, launched in May of 2015, is a partnership between the Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG), the National Association of Counties, and The American Psychiatric Association Foundation, which focuses on reducing the number of individuals with mental illnesses in counties across the country. The initiative provides technical assistance to participating counties through the resources of the partnerships; and

WHEREAS, More than 350 counties across the country have joined the initiative, including the Montgomery County, Bucks County and Berks County in Pennsylvania. Additionally, Pennsylvania launched a statewide Stepping Up Initiative in April of 2017, making it the third state in the country to take on the issue, along with Ohio and California; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia takes pride in our responsibility to protect and enhance the health, welfare, and safety of its residents in efficient and cost-effective ways. To further these goals, Philadelphia seeks to join in the effort to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in our county jail, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties across Pennsylvania and across the country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees, and residents to participate in Stepping Up; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes Philadelphia to officially join the National Stepping Up Initiative, which focuses on reducing the number of individuals with mental illnesses in jail in counties across the country.