

Legislation Text

File #: 180269, **Version:** 0

Authorizing the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings examining strategies to increase diversity and inclusion in Philadelphia's technology sector.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is the poorest major city in the United States. The Pew Charitable Trusts reporting in November 2017 that 25.7% of the City's residents live below the poverty line. The report also found racial disparities in poverty rates. The rate was 30.8% among African-Americans and 37.9% among Hispanics; and

WHEREAS, Meanwhile, an analysis of U.S. Department of Labor statistics by Headlight Data found that Philadelphia had the fourth strongest year-over-year job growth among large metropolitan areas, ahead of economic powerhouses including Seattle; and

WHEREAS, Statistics compiled from 2002-2015 by the Department of Labor found that 25% of jobs created in the Philadelphia metropolitan area during that period were technology positions. Nearly one third of the technology workforce was found to have less than a bachelor's degree, yet many entry-level positions in the field have salaries over \$60,000 according to data from staffing firm Robert Half; and

WHEREAS, Data published by the Ascend Foundation found that 1.9% of the tech workforce was African-American while 4.8% was Hispanic, a decline from 2007 levels of representation. Moreover, data from major tech companies collected in 2017 by Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting found that women of color were particularly underrepresented in the technology sector; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is committed to increasing not only the vitality of the technology sector but also to increasing diversity and inclusion within that sector's workforce. Through StartUpPHL, the City has made targeted investments in companies growing in Philadelphia, while supporting networking events like the annual Diversity Dinner, which are aimed at bringing together individuals from across the City's tech sector to discuss strategies aimed at building a more inclusive industry; and

WHEREAS, The City has seen the value of tech jobs for alleviating poverty and creating opportunity in Philadelphia. In 2015, StartUpPHL entered into a partnership to fund a coding boot camp meant to serve low-income individuals by providing a path toward a job in the tech sector; and

WHEREAS, Creating a talent pipeline into the tech workforce that represents the City, with all of its diversity, is essential for growing Philadelphia's economy in the 21st century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development be authorized to hold hearings examining strategies to increase diversity and inclusion in Philadelphia's technology sector.