

Legislation Text

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Amending Title 14 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Zoning and Planning," by revising Section 14-303 (11A), entitled "Registered Community Organizations," by providing funding for limited insurance coverage for Registered Community Organizations; all under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, On January 31, 2018, the Council of the City of Philadelphia Committee on Rules heard testimony from the leadership and membership of Registered Community Organizations from across the City regarding the difficulty in obtaining Directors and Officers Insurance due to the threat of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia has embraced and supported the civic engagement of its residents by codifying the right of community organizations to participate in the zoning process via the Registered Community Organization subsection of the Zoning and Planning code; and

WHEREAS, This Council finds that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is responsible for issuing the appropriate laws and regulations to curb the prevalence of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation; and

WHEREAS, In the absence of such action by the Commonwealth, the City of Philadelphia has a moral obligation to support its Registered Community Organizations against the threat of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation to reduce the cost of obtaining Directors and Officers Insurance and to provide for a subsidy thereof; now, therefore

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Title 14 of The Philadelphia Code is hereby amended as follows:

TITLE 14. ZONING AND PLANNING.

* * *

CHAPTER 14-300. ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES.

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§ 14-303. Common Procedures and Requirements.

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(11A) Registered Community Organizations. An organization that seeks recognition as a Registered Community Organization ("RCO") for purposes of §14-303(12) ("Neighborhood Notice and Meetings") must first register with the Commission in accordance with the provisions of this §14-303(11A).

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(e) An RCO must promptly inform the Commission of any changes to the information provided on a registration or re-registration request form.

(f) Once an organization has been registered by the Commission as a Registered Community Organization, The Director of Finance is authorized to provide funding to help offset the cost of Directors and Officers Insurance premiums attributable to the threat of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) for qualified Registered Community Organizations. The Director of Finance shall submit a report to the Council President and the Chief Clerk of City Council concerning the distribution of any such funds over the course of the previous fiscal year at the time of the annual submission of the proposed operating budget to the Council.

~~(g)~~ Regulations.

The Commission is authorized to promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this subsection (11A). These regulations may include guidelines concerning operations by Registered Community Organizations that constitute an RCO Code of Conduct; *and may include guidelines concerning the disbursement of supporting funds towards the costs of Directors and Officers Insurance premiums.* Failure to operate within these guidelines may result in the temporary or permanent suspension of organizations from the RCO registry, as outlined by the regulations of the Commission.

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SECTION 2. Nothing in this Ordinance shall construe the liability of the City of Philadelphia in any action brought against a Registered Community Organization.

SECTION 3. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.

Explanation:

~~Strikethrough~~ indicates matter deleted.

Italics indicate new matter added.