Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention to hold hearings to examine the effect of gun violence on victims and co-victims, as well as the resources available to them.

WHEREAS, Gun violence is a persistent, growing threat to the safety and well-being of communities. In 2016, the American Medical Association declared gun violence a public health crisis nationally. Likewise, in 2017, this Body recognized gun violence as a public health crisis in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, Philadelphia recorded 356 homicides, an average of about one per day. That total marked the highest homicide count in over a decade. Almost all of those homicides were committed with firearms; and

WHEREAS, There were also more than a thousand non-fatal shootings in Philadelphia last year. Those who survive gun violence often suffer long-term disability, including paralysis, organ malfunction, and chronic pain; and

WHEREAS, Both gun violence victims and their co-victims - family, friends, and community members - suffer long-term, devastating burdens as a result of gun violence. In addition to physical disability, the emotional and psychological trauma inflicted by gun violence is devastating. Victims and co-victims suffer PTSD at rates several times greater than average. Moreover, the financial burdens created by funerals, medical care, displacement, and other consequences of gun violence are often overwhelming. For example, survivors of gun violence survivors face an average of $46,632 in medical costs, according to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Moreover, social stigma and isolation are common among victims and co-victims; and

WHEREAS, People of color are disproportionately likely to be victims or co-victims of gun violence, according to the Center for Victim Research; and

WHEREAS, While some financial, social, and other resources are available to victims, they are limited and often uncoordinated. Victims and co-victims generally have to work separately with several different governmental agencies and non-governmental groups to access all available, necessary resources; and

WHEREAS, For the reasons above, and given the complexity and importance of this pervasive issue, careful examination is necessary and proper; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Special Committee on Gun Violence Prevention is authorized to hold hearings to examine the effect of gun violence on victims and co-victims, as well as the resources available to them.