



Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Children and Youth to conduct hearings regarding the City's investment in expanding developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and evidence-based programming for youth experiencing violence and gun violence in their communities.

WHEREAS, Violence and guns have a far-reaching and significant impact on the safety, mental and physical health, and life outcomes of young people and further impact whole communities; and

WHEREAS, Bearing witness to, or being victimized by, violence negatively impacts every aspect of youth health as well as academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, Youth who are exposed to violence have an increased likelihood of mental health challenges ranging from post-traumatic stress and anxiety, to depression and antisocial behavior, to physical challenges including increased inflammatory reactions, mortality, and advanced aging; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia sees an unacceptable number of violent crimes, shootings, and homicides each year, with children far too often the victims of this violence. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, 115 children under the age of 18 were injured or killed by gun violence in the City in 2019. That includes 17 children aged 12 and younger, the highest number for that age group in the past five years. Just one month into 2020, already 10 children under 18 were victims of gun violence; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia children are also the subject of other forms of violence that bears a profound impact. A 2013 survey of Philadelphia adults found that 40 percent witnessed some form of violence as a child. More than 37 percent reported at least four Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) growing up, which includes different kinds of physical, emotional and sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, Violence is frequently a symptom of broader inequality and racism. Too often, young people feel unsupported and alone as they navigate significant life challenges, including those rooted in discrimination, long-term community disinvestment, and inadequate social programs; and

WHEREAS, City-funded programs, institutions, and spaces - from schools to libraries to recreation centers - play a critical role in nurturing and supporting the City's 300,000 young people; and

WHEREAS, Any City-level conversations and initiatives to address the problems of violence and guns as related to young people must thoughtfully engage those same young people as fellow problem solvers and key stakeholders; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes the Committee on Children and Youth to conduct hearings regarding the City's investment in expanding developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and evidence-based programming for youth experiencing violence and gun violence in their communities.