

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on People with Disabilities and Special needs to hold public hearings regarding the parental rights of parents with disabilities.

WHEREAS, The month of March has been celebrated nationwide since 1987 as National Developmental Disability Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, Individuals with disabilities face certain preconceived biases and discriminatory perceptions regarding their ability to successfully parent their children in family and dependency law proceedings where custody and visitation are at stake and in public and private adoption, guardianship, and foster care proceedings; and

WHEREAS, Children of parents with disabilities are often unfairly and unnecessarily removed from their parents' care or restricted from enjoying any significant meaningful time with their parents as a result of these preconceived biases and discriminatory attitudes; and

WHEREAS, For example, the National Federation of the Blind estimates that as many as one in four households in which the parents are blind have been visited and/or are monitored by employees of a child protection services agency; and

WHEREAS, Disabilities in themselves do not preclude an individual's ability to competently parent a child, as parents with disabilities have demonstrated that they have developed and adopted alternative methods and life skills by which they successfully parent; and

WHEREAS, Legislation has already been enacted across the nation in 10 individual states (specifically, Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Utah) establishing protections and strengthening the parental rights of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, There is currently a lack of clarity about the treatment parents with disabilities receive from Philadelphia agencies and court systems; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative that Philadelphia protect its most vulnerable residents; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council's Committee on People with Disabilities and Special Needs is hereby authorized to hold public hearings regarding the parental rights of parents with disabilities.