

## Legislation Text

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Authorizing the City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings evaluating lessons learned from the City's COVID-19 pandemic response.

WHEREAS, COVID-19, a new strain of Coronavirus, developed in December of 2019. Since then, it has spread across the globe and was declared a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. Philadelphia saw its first confirmed case in early March and reported its first death from the virus on March 25, 2020; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has required a comprehensive and unprecedented response from all areas of the government and the effects of this pandemic will continue to be felt long after the pandemic subsides; and

WHEREAS, The pandemic had an immediate effect on small businesses throughout the City. This Council appreciates the importance of small businesses in our communities and shall examine the effectiveness of aid they received, and what additional aid they will require in the immediate future, as well as safeguards for the future; and

WHEREAS, Criminal justice departments and agencies including the Philadelphia Police Department, Department of Prisons, District Attorney's Office, Defender Association and First Judicial District faced particular challenges during the pandemic. These departments and agencies are integral to the function and safety of Philadelphia. It is important to reflect on their response to this pandemic, and put necessary safeguards into place for the future; and

WHEREAS, The nature of COVID-19 posed a significantly heightened threat to our elderly populations and those who are immunocompromised. As such, senior care facilities were presented with the distinct challenge of ensuring the safety of their residents. It is important to hear from residents and employees of these facilities to understand their needs and plan for the future; and

WHEREAS, In order to slow the spread of the virus, the Philadelphia School District closed its doors and began remote learning programs, which became a difficult task to accomplish, as many students did not have access to the required technology. This Council, in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia, must examine the programs in place for its students and how it maintained those programs during a time of extreme hardship; and

WHEREAS, But for teleconferencing technology and other means of remote work, this pandemic's already dramatic impact would have been more severe. This Council shall evaluate the use of teleconferencing during this time, as well as how it can be improved for increased access in the future; and

WHEREAS, The importance of the healthcare industry and workers during this pandemic cannot be overstated. This Council must listen to the experiences of healthcare professionals and reflect on its gratitude for their perseverance and self-sacrifice in a time of crisis in order to be better prepared for any future crises; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the City Council Committee on Public Safety to hold public hearings evaluating lessons learned from the City's COVID-19 pandemic response.