

## Legislation Text

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Calling on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to reverse the legalization of the sale of “consumer fireworks” in the State of Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, In 2017, House Bill 542 legalized the sale of “consumer fireworks” in the state of Pennsylvania. “Consumer fireworks” include firecrackers, Roman candles, sparklers, and bottle rockets; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, Philadelphia legalized the use of ground-based fireworks, firecrackers, Roman candles, bottle rockets, and other “consumer fireworks”; and

WHEREAS, The purchase and sale of “consumer fireworks” as well as the recent use of other explosive devices creates several enforcement and safety issues in Philadelphia. Over three weeks this month, the Philadelphia Police Department has gotten nearly 1,000 emergency calls complaining about a “boom” or “explosive” sound. Police responded to 135 explosive events, including about 50 attacks on ATMs caused by homemade M100 or M250 explosive devices. One man died in his attempt to blow up an ATM, and another man was arrested for using Instagram to sell homemade dynamite to break into ATMs. This reminds us of the dangers of both fireworks and illegal firecracker-like explosives, when in 2018, a 9-year old Philadelphia girl suffered life-altering injuries after an M80 explosive detonated in her hand while she was home alone. Both the Philadelphia police and fire departments attempt to respond to fireworks-related complaints but are often unable to file charges or cite residents as it is difficult to locate who is igniting or discharging fireworks and other explosives illegally, and where someone may be igniting or discharging them illegally; and

WHEREAS, The sale of airborne “consumer fireworks,” including Roman candles and bottle rockets, is only allowed at brick-and-mortar stores. However, fireworks, both legal and illegal, are often brought into Philadelphia neighborhoods for resale and use without the guarantee that those younger than 18 years of age are not using, possessing, or purchasing them; and

WHEREAS, In 2018, there were at least five fireworks-related deaths and 9,100 injuries nationwide, most commonly to the hands, fingers, legs, eyes, head, face, and ears. An estimated 1,000 emergency department-treated injuries were associated with firecrackers; 500 were associated with sparklers, 400 were associated with Roman candles, and 200 were associated with bottle rockets; and

WHEREAS, Children ages 10-14 have the highest rate of emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries, and older teens ages 15-19 have the second highest rate of emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries; and

WHEREAS, The loud sounds and unpredictability of fireworks present a major quality of life issue causing noise pollution and severe physical and psychological distress, especially for veterans and gun violence survivors suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder; individuals on the autism spectrum; the elderly; and family pets; and

WHEREAS, Fireworks cause acute environmental pollution, releasing smoke, chemical residue, and fine

particles in the air, water, and soil that, when inhaled or ingested, can lead to negative health implications, such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, asthma attacks, vomiting, diarrhea, and even heart attacks especially in individuals with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Calls on the Pennsylvania General Assembly to reverse the legalization of the sale of “consumer fireworks” in the state of Pennsylvania.