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September 17, 2021

TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA:

I am hereby returning without my signature Bill No. 210511, which was passed by Council at its session on June 17, 2021. This bill would offer vouchers for rebates on City gas and water charges to residents and property owners of Philadelphia who received vaccinations for COVID-19 in order to incentivize immunizations against the disease.

Philadelphia has been making progress toward containing the COVID-19 pandemic and toward greater equity in our containment efforts. To date, 82.5% or 1,024,092, Philadelphians age 18 and over have had at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and 67.7% or 840,641, Philadelphians age 18 and over are fully vaccinated. Due to the significant progress in the vaccination rate, Philadelphia is seeing a much less dramatic increase in cases as a result of the COVID-19 Delta variant than many areas of the country.

Incentives provided by community partners including our local sports teams have helped drive our strong vaccination rate. Currently, people who get vaccinated at a Philadelphia Department of Public Health clinics can receive two tickets to an upcoming Phillies game. Previously, we have offered free Wawa coffee, Sixers tickets, autographed Sixers items, Eagles preseason tickets, and a vaccine sweepstakes, which gave away hundreds of thousands of dollars to vaccinated residents over the course of the summer.

In addition to these incentives, we have been conducting extensive outreach work since January of this year. Currently our greatest success is coming from the door-to-door work by PhillyCounts, where community members are visited in person to receive accurate and clear information on the vaccine. We are working with them to identify spots where additional vaccine clinics should be located to best provide access to under-vaccinated areas.

While we are supportive of incentives and the intent of this legislation, the Administration has concerns about Bill No. 210511 in terms of equitable delivery and implementation time. We believe that our current vaccination strategy and outreach will continue to be the best approach to maximize vaccination rates for all Philadelphians.

For these reasons, I am returning without my signature, Bill No. 210511.

Respectfully,

JAMES F. KENNEY
Mayor

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