

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committees on Public Safety, Labor and Civil Service, and Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation to hold a hearing examining the current staffing landscape within the Philadelphia Police Department to identify problems and solutions to improve public safety and ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia continues to experience an increase in homicides and other gun offenses as we being the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, The City's police force is currently authorized to employ 6,380 officers, but as of this month, over 450 of those positions are vacant. Additionally, over 900 officers are currently on some form of administrative or medical leave; and

WHEREAS, It is crucial to examine the staffing landscape within the Philadelphia Police Department. Citizens rely an efficiently running department in order to feel safe and to feel that their tax dollars are being put to effective use; and

WHEREAS, On February 1, 2022, the Philadelphia Inquirer published a story titled, "MIA: A Crisis in the Ranks" detailing the staffing woes and misuse of medical leave within the Philadelphia Police Department; and

WHEREAS, The Inquirer's investigative reporting suggests that part of the staffing issues currently plaguing the Department is driven by the unpunished improper use of medical leave benefits authorized under state law. Officers who experience injuries on the job absolutely should be able to access medical leave, however, the City must diligently manage this program to avoid misuse and preserve public trust; and

WHEREAS, Covid-19 continues to affect all City departments. Even as vaccinations have become widely available, breakthrough cases of Covid have become more common. As officers become ill and need to quarantine, staffing issues are exacerbated; and

WHEREAS, The Police Department's staffing shortages create the need for more use of overtime, which in turn will need to be accounted for in the budget and the Five Year Plan. In FY21, the overtime budget was exceeded by 127%. Moreover, an increase in police department employees' participation in the DROP program must also be addressed in the City's fiscal planning both now and for the future; and

WHEREAS, The City must closely examine what is causing the Police Department to experience such significant staffing problems and find solutions in order to promote public safety and to preserve its fiscal health; and

WHEREAS, Public concern over safety has grown as Philadelphia began experiencing a major increase in gun crimes and homicides during the pandemic. Now is not the time to further endanger public confidence in City government by failing to address staffing issues; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the City Council of Philadelphia does hereby authorize the Committees on Public Safety,

Labor and Civil Service, and Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation to hold a hearing examining the current staffing landscape within the Philadelphia Police Department to identify problems and solutions to improve public safety and ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars.