Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings examining the City's strategy for increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in public contracts.

WHEREAS, High rates of poverty have resulted in Philadelphia being labeled "the poorest big city in America". According to U.S. Census Bureau data published in September 2023, Philadelphia's poverty rate is 21.7%. While this data reflects a year-over-year reduction, Philadelphia's poverty rate remains the highest among America's ten largest cities; and

WHEREAS, The impacts of poverty in Philadelphia are concentrated primarily in Black and brown communities. Despite a citywide reduction, the poverty rate among African-American households remains higher than the citywide average at 25%. At the same time, Hispanic households saw a year-over-year increase in poverty; according to the Census Bureau, one in three Hispanic households lives below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, To address stubbornly high rates of poverty in historically disenfranchised communities, the City has established targets for minority contract and workforce participation in City-funded projects. The City has established a longstanding target of 35 percent for M/W/DSBE participation in City contracts. And the City has also pursued strategies for expanding workforce opportunities through robust workforce participation requirements; and

WHEREAS, To coordinate the City's efforts, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) has been tasked with supporting M/W/DBE development, reviewing City contracts to ensure consistency with established diversity targets, and monitoring and enforcing contractors' compliance with Economic Opportunity Plans; and

WHEREAS, City policies designed to expand economic opportunity in historically disadvantaged communities are of vital importance to our collective efforts to reduce poverty in Philadelphia. To ensure that the City's diversity, equity, and inclusion policies are effective in expanding economic opportunity and supporting the development of Philadelphia's diverse workforce and business community, Council must take an active role in reviewing and improving these policies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold hearings examining the City's strategy for increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in public contracts.