Legislation Text

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Urging Governor Josh Shapiro to establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention in Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has consistently seen one of the highest rates of gun violence among major cities in the United States. In 2021, Philadelphia experienced over 500 homicides, the city's highest count in more than a decade, with the majority of these deaths being attributed to gun violence. Although Philadelphia has seen a 9% decline in gun violence in 2023 compared to the same time in 2022, Philadelphia continues to face unacceptably high rates of homicides and other firearm-related crimes; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania suffers from rates of gun violence that far exceed those in neighboring states. In 2021, the Commonwealth experienced 14.8 firearm-related deaths per 100,000 residents, compared with only 5.8 in New York and 5.2 in New Jersey, according to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, The frequency and severity of gun violence in Philadelphia and across the Commonwealth underscore the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address this crisis. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a state Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) in Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, The OGVP would provide the framework for a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained effort to reduce gun violence in Pennsylvania. It could also serve as a centralized body to coordinate and enhance the Commonwealth's efforts to prevent gun violence, and could work in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and public health officials to develop and implement evidence-based strategies to prevent gun violence; and

WHEREAS, A Pennsylvania OGVP would also enhance the Commonwealth's coordination with federal efforts to reduce gun violence through the newly established federal Office of Gun Violence Prevention; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of an Office of Gun Violence Prevention would be a significant step in the right direction for both Philadelphia and for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a whole and would send a strong message that the Commonwealth's elected leaders are committed to taking decisive action to address this crisis; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA hereby urges Governor Josh Shapiro to establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention in Pennsylvania.