



Legislation Text

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Calling on the Administration to further examine the “consent-to-search” program in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, as an alternative to gun buy backs to increase the understanding of its potential impacts on the continual efforts of gun seizures in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, In the 1990s the City of St. Louis experimented with the consent to search program, which consists of Law Enforcement Officers going door to door in neighborhoods in the City with high rates of gun crime. Officers go to the homes of young people in the area who are at risk of involvement in gun violence and ask permission from the parents to search the house for guns; and

WHEREAS, If the officers find illegal weapons, they are confiscated but neither the parents nor the child were prosecuted. The consent to search program was conducted at night, where officers conducted between five and thirty searches each night. Overall, guns were discovered about half of the time the searches were conducted. They recovered an average of three guns per household, bringing in more than 500 guns over 18 months; and

WHEREAS, When asked by law enforcement, guardians of the home gave consent to the search 98% of the time. As a result of the youth centered approach to the program and the focus on simply confiscating the guns as opposed to penalizing and prosecuting the children and families involved. This approach aided in a way to build trust, between law enforcement and families in the City area, as well as removing illegal guns from the streets; and

WHEREAS, This program was efficient for the City of St. Louis and their efforts to reduce gun violence among youth in their City. Law enforcement officials were able to safely confiscate illegal weapons from at risk youth and reduce the presence of possession on the streets; and

WHEREAS, This program could prove to be an effective method for violence reduction in the City of Philadelphia and reducing youth violence in City neighborhoods. The gun violence rates among youth in Philadelphia continue to increase in clusters around specific neighborhoods. The number of shooting victims under the age of 18 has steadily grown since 2015, from 6.3% to 9.6%. Along with the percentage of young people arrested for gun violence which has tripled between 2017 and 2022; and

WHEREAS, In the City of Philadelphia there needs to an assessment of possible initiatives to evaluate programs which can aid in the reduction of gun violence in the City. The consent to search program needs to be evaluated and assessed by the administration to determine its possible success or feasibility in the City of Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls on the Administration to further examine the “consent-to-search” program in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, as an alternative to gun buy backs to increase the understanding of its potential impacts on the continual efforts of gun seizures in the City of Philadelphia.

