



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

RESOLUTION NO. 120092

Introduced February 9, 2012

**Councilmembers Johnson, Jones,
Greenlee, Oh and O'Brien**

RESOLUTION

Authorizing City Council's Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings to investigate the availability of emergency shelters in Philadelphia for victims of domestic violence who have been forced from their homes by violence or who need to escape abusive situations.

WHEREAS, Domestic violence disproportionately affects women and children and is a common cause of family homelessness in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Emergency shelters are crucial in addressing the needs of individuals and families escaping abusive situations by providing temporary or transitional shelter for victims while they prepare to move into more stable housing arrangements; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has a limited number of emergency shelter beds designated for victims of domestic violence, and as a result, emergency shelters have been forced to turn victims away due to a lack of room;¹ and

WHEREAS, The lack of available beds in emergency shelters designated for domestic violence victims in Philadelphia prevents a large number of victims from escaping their abusive relationships and moving on toward recovery; and

WHEREAS, Victims of domestic violence, who escape abusive households but are unable to secure emergency shelter, often return to abusive situations or become homeless; in fact, 92% of homeless women have survived abuse in their lives;² and

¹ Women Against Abuse.

² U.S. Conference of Mayors/Sodexo Survey on Hunger and Homelessness, 2005.

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RESOLUTION NO. 120092 continued

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, the ratio of emergency shelter beds designated for domestic violence victims, in relation to the number of victims in need of these beds, is lower than in Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Pittsburgh;³ and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is the third poorest city⁴ and the poorest major city in America,⁵ and many victims of domestic violence do not have sufficient finances to escape abusive households on their own; and

WHEREAS, Inadequate emergency shelter services strain Philadelphia's social programs such as hospitals, schools, prisons, and behavioral health services, several of which have dealt with increasingly tight fiscal constraints over the past several years; and

WHEREAS, Unaddressed domestic violence too often results in homicide; indeed, domestic homicide has been on the rise in recent years, with Philadelphia experiencing a sharp increase in domestic violence related homicides in 2009; now therefore,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council's Committee on Public Safety is hereby authorized to hold hearings to investigate the availability of emergency shelters in Philadelphia for victims of domestic violence who have been forced from their homes by violence or who need to escape abusive situations.

³ Research conducted by Women Against Abuse.

⁴ The Pew Charitable Trusts. (2010). *Philadelphia: The State of the City*.

⁵ Lubrano, Alfred, and Purcell, Dylan. (2010, Sept. 29). *Philadelphia Inquirer*. "Census Figures in Region Show Poor Getting Poorer."