

City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia
Office of the Chief Clerk
Room 402, City Hall
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 120501)

RESOLUTION

Urging the restoration of the proposed devastating 20 percent cutbacks to the State human service budget by Governor Tom Corbett.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia citizens attended a May 1, 2012 community forum to demonstrate their strong opposition to Governor Tom Corbett's proposed 20 percent cutback in State funding for county-administered human service programs as well as their opposition to the Governor's proposed block grant to allocate such funding; and

WHEREAS, A subsequent State Senate-passed budget proposal partially restores funding but, in any event, has not yet been considered by the State House and has not been approved by the Governor; and

WHEREAS, We remain concerned that any consideration of funding reduction in this area is not focused on the mutual objective of eliminating "waste, fraud and abuse," but will instead result in the elimination of services for persons with significant and legitimate need; and

WHEREAS, A funding cut to Philadelphia would result in the loss of \$42 million for mental illness, intellectual and developmental disabilities, addiction, homelessness, and child abuse service programs for some of the most vulnerable and least fortunate among us; and

WHEREAS, Despite the steady rise in Department of Public Welfare's overall budget in the past decade, the county-managed funding streams slated for these cuts have already been consistently cut over the previous ten years, eroding our capacity to respond to a growing local demand for services; and

WHEREAS, Governor Corbett's proposed cuts break a State promise made when Harrisburg State Hospital was closed to provide sustained funding for community-based mental health services as an alternative to higher-cost institutional care; and

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WHEREAS, It has not yet been determined if the block grant approach will cause Philadelphia and other counties to inherit legal and financial responsibility and liability previously held by the State under Pennsylvania's Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act of 1966; and

WHEREAS, The proposed block grant appears to shift State obligation for these services, along with the potential for additional costs, onto the backs of already overburdened local property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, The proposed block grants appears to undermine and negate the administrative efficiencies of multi-county jointers that have evolved for local management of mental health, intellectual disabilities, and substance abuse services, and will result in greater administrative costs rather than the administrative savings promised by the Governor's administration; and

WHEREAS, Many questions remain unanswered as to whether the proposed block grant runs counter to federal requirements regarding maintenance of effort provisions, Medical Assistance waiver conditions, and federal block grant mandates, thus potentially jeopardizing crucial federal funds; and

WHEREAS, The proposed block grant along with a cut in funding places City of Philadelphia in the difficult position of allocating a shrinking pool of resources between equally needy citizens; and

WHEREAS, Even though the proposed funding cuts and move to block grant would be one of the most fundamental changes ever made in the way Pennsylvania operates county-managed human services, the individuals and families served by these programs have been given no opportunity by the Governor's administration to provide input in the planning process through public hearings; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, respectfully urges the General Assembly and the Governor to restore funding for these important human service needs in the final 2012-13 State budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Voices its opposition to any statewide implementation of a human services block grant at this time on the grounds that to move forward in spite of so many unanswered questions would be irresponsible, and would undoubtedly lead to unnecessary confusion and disruption of important community services for some of our neediest citizens and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be distributed to all members of Philadelphia's delegation to the State Senate and House, and to the Honorable Tom Corbett, Governor.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-fourth of May, 2012.

Darrell L. Clarke
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Michael A. Decker
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Brien

Sponsored by: Councilmembers O'Brien, Tasco, Squilla, Goode, Johnson, Greenlee, Oh, Green, Henon, Quiñones Sánchez, Reynolds Brown, Kenney, Blackwell, Bass, Jones, O'Neill and Council President Clarke