

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 080177)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Council Committee on Public Safety to investigate the expansion of the Philadelphia Community Court in order to reduce cost, reduce overcrowding within the prison system and empower the community.

WHEREAS, Community courts are neighborhood-focused courts designed to create lasting relationships between local communities and the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Community courts can be a useful tool in reducing crime, involving citizens in the court system, improving neighborhood safety and creating accountability for low-level offenders; and

WHEREAS, Other cities, most notably New York, have used community courts effectively to reduce criminal recidivism by providing courts in a number of different neighborhoods that can deal with a variety of offences; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Community Court has limited jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia would benefit from the identification of best practices elsewhere with regards to community courts; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia does not use its community court system most effectively; and

WHEREAS, The annual cost to incarcerate one individual is approximately \$32,000 a year and the annual costs of alternative sentencing through community courts is approximately \$16,000; and

WHEREAS, The stated capacity of the Philadelphia prison system is 6180 inmates and the number of incarcerated offenders frequently exceeds 9000; and

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 080177 continued

WHEREAS, Offenders with serious mental illness, who's cases represent an extra financial hardship for the City, would be better served by community courts and their affiliated social service providers; and

WHEREAS, One of the key principles of community courts is to involve local stakeholders directly in the affairs of their community by way of community service suggestion hotlines, regular attendance at community meetings, and development of volunteer networks; now therefore

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes the Council Committee on Public Safety to investigate the expansion of the Philadelphia Community Court in order to reduce cost, reduce overcrowding within the prison system and empower the community.

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 080177 continued

City of Philadelphia

RESOLUTION NO. 080177 continued

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fourteenth of February, 2008.

Anna C. Verna
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Patricia Rafferty
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmembers Jones, Tasco, Goode, Green, Reynolds
Brown and Miller

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones, Tasco, Goode, Green, Reynolds
Brown, Miller, Greenlee, Sanchez, Council President Verna,
Councilmembers Rizzo, Blackwell, Kenney and DiCicco