

**MOTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY**

By supporting the efforts underway by various county and state officials to address the issue of racial bias and imbalance in the jury system and provide solutions that will equalize representation in the jury system.

WHEREAS, a recent study found that only 4% of potential criminal jurors in Allegheny County are African-American, while African-Americans make up 11% of the county's adult population and that adults living in African-American neighborhoods are half as likely to be summoned for criminal jury duty than those living in neighborhoods where 98 percent of the population is white; and

WHEREAS, the right to a fair trial by a jury of one's peers is fundamental to the country's justice system and racial imbalance casts a reasonable doubt on that promise; and

WHEREAS, the US Supreme Court has ruled that the right of citizens to serve on juries derives from their freedom of speech and that jury pools must represent a "fair cross-section" of the community; and

WHEREAS, Judicial manipulation of the jury room has been necessary to guarantee that African-American defendants get a chance to have African-American peers on their juries; and

WHEREAS, District Attorney Stephen A. Zappala, Jr. is actively seeking and supports remedies that will protect the Constitutional rights of the citizens of Allegheny County and, in protecting those rights, has asked the County's Jury Commission to develop a business plan to fix the problem of too few African-Americans in the pool of potential jurors; and

WHEREAS, District Attorney Zappala and Recorder of Deeds Valerie McDonald-Roberts have formed a committee that has met with pastors of African-American churches to ask them to encourage their congregations to sign up for jury duty; and

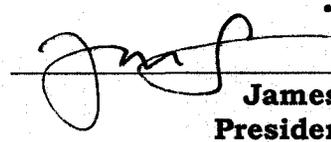
WHEREAS, Senator Jane Clare Orie will be introducing a resolution to authorize a study looking into criminal jury pools across the state to find out whether minorities are underrepresented in the pools and to recommend a remedy if they are; and

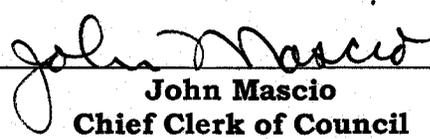
**NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED, AND IT IS THE SENSE OF THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY,**

That this Council hereby does support the efforts of District Attorney Zappala, Recorder of Deeds McDonald-Roberts, Senator Orié and other county and state officials that are addressing the racial imbalance of juries and who are working proactively towards increasing the representation of African-Americans on juries.

**SPONSORED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS FRAZIER, FITZGERALD, FONTANA, REA, SCHWARTZ & SHUMAKER**

In Council August 22 2002, Read and Approved.

  
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**James E. Simms**  
**President of Council**

Attest:   
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**John Mascio**  
**Chief Clerk of Council**

## Mascio, John

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**From:** Mascio, John  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 28, 2002 11:18 AM  
**To:** Zappala, Stephen; Milko, Jean; Kirschman, Allen; McDonald-Roberts, Valerie; Billotte, Ray; David Brightbill; Jack Wagner; Jane Orie; Jay Costa; Jeffery E. Piccola; Leonard Bodack; Michael A. O'Pake; Robert J. Mellow; Robert Jubelirer; Sean Logan; Tim Murphy  
**Subject:** Bill No. 0820-02 Motion of Council Regarding Jury System

Attached is a copy of Allegheny County Council Bill No. 0820 -02, a Motion of Council sponsored by Council Members Frazier, Fitzgerald, Fontana, Rea, Schwartz and Shumaker, which passed unanimously in Allegheny County Council on August 22, 2002.

As you will read, the bill is a Motion Expressing the Sense of Allegheny County Council by supporting the efforts underway by various county and state officials to address the issue of racial bias and imbalance in the jury system and provide solutions that will equalize representation in the jury system.

Your attention to this motion is requested.

Sincerely,

John Mascio  
Chief Clerk  
Allegheny County Council



0820-02 Sense of  
Council Motio...