



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
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Legislation Text

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Motion of the Council of Allegheny County expressing the Sense of the Council of Allegheny County urging the Allegheny County Government Review Commission to thoroughly consider recommending that the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County be amended to provide for the creation of one additional At-Large Allegheny County Council seat in order to guarantee representation for individuals not affiliated with either major political party.

WHEREAS, the citizens of Allegheny County adopted a Home Rule Charter, effective January 1, 2000, which provided for, among other things, a new County government as required by the Second Class County Charter Law consisting of an elected chief executive, an elected county council and the Independently Elected County Officials known as “the Row Officers”; and

WHEREAS, as originally drafted, the Home Rule Charter provided for an Allegheny County Council comprised of 13 Members elected by District and 2 At-Large Members, with one of the At-Large seats essentially guaranteed to each of the two major political parties; and

WHEREAS, those Allegheny County residents choosing to remain unaffiliated with either major political party has increased to 112,801 voters (or 13.2% of the total registered voters in Allegheny County) since the Home Rule Charter was drafted over fifteen years ago; and

WHEREAS, approximately 94,000 County residents (or about 7.8% of the County’s population) live within each Council District; and

WHEREAS, according to published reports and Pennsylvania Department of State statistics, third-party or non-party registrations grew by 18 percent statewide in the past 10 years, by 20 percent in Western Pennsylvania and by 22 percent in Allegheny County; and

WHEREAS, it is the judgment of Council that the substantial and increasing number of Allegheny County residents registering as Independents and non-affiliated with any political party should justify the consideration of establishing another at-large Member of Council in order to guarantee representation for those individuals who opt not to be affiliated with either major party; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, it is further the judgment of Council that this new Countywide elected At-Large Member should be reserved for an individual who is registered as an Independent or non-affiliated with any political party; and

WHEREAS, an ordinance to place a ballot question authorizing amendment of the Home Rule Charter to make this change was introduced in November of 2011, and is attached to this motion; and

WHEREAS, unfortunately, the previous ordinance expired by operation of rule at the conclusion of 2011, without having been reviewed in committee; and

WHEREAS, because the Allegheny County Government Review Commission was established in 2015 pursuant to Article XIII, §5 of the Home Rule Charter, and is specifically charged with the duty to “...study the Charter and County government, including the organization, practices and responsibilities of all County departments and agencies,” as well as the responsibility to “...evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and equity of County government and this Charter.”; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore the judgment of Council that consideration of the possible addition of one At-Large Council seat reserved for an individual not affiliated with either major political party falls squarely within the delineated duties of the Government Review Commission;

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS MOVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF ALLEGHENY COUNTY,

That the Allegheny County Government Review Commission is hereby urged to thoroughly consider recommending that the Home Rule Charter of Allegheny County be amended to provide for the creation of one additional At-Large Allegheny County Council seat in order to guarantee representation for individuals not affiliated with either major political party.