



Allegheny County Council

County of Allegheny
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Legislation Text

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A Resolution of the Council of the County of Allegheny, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, establishing a working group to study possible mechanisms for recovering costs relating to the operation of the Allegheny County Jail and other costs incurred by the County's criminal justice system.

WHEREAS, expenses relating to the operation of the Allegheny County Jail constitute a significant portion of the County's 2015 operating budget; and

WHEREAS, for 2015 alone, the County appropriated \$53,976,409 for the County Jail's Division of Operations, and another \$10,358,280 for the Jail Medical Division; and

WHEREAS, for 2015, the County's operating budget reflected only \$740,000 in anticipated cost recoveries, with \$340,000 of those anticipated recoveries coming from the regional booking centers; and

WHEREAS, as a result, the County Jail's operations and medical expenses for 2015 were budgeted at a total of over \$64.4 million, with anticipated cost recoveries for its operations and medical expenses budgeted at a total of only \$400,000, or 0.62% of the total; and

WHEREAS, other counties within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, perhaps most notably Lancaster County, have adopted programs of recovering at least some portion of the costs of operating their county jails, and of the costs of providing medical care to the inmates housed in those facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Corrections in the State of Connecticut has created a Collection Recovery Unit in order to collect money from prisoners' estates, inheritances, civil court winnings, lottery annuity payments and personal injury insurance claims in order to reimburse the state for services provided by the Department during the imprisonment of those individuals; and

WHEREAS, the expansion of Medicaid benefits under the terms of the Affordable Care Act may also render it possible to seek reimbursement of some of the costs associated with providing medical care to Allegheny County Jail inmates under certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Council to establish a working group to study the possible mechanisms through which more of the costs of operating the Allegheny County Jail may be recovered upon individuals housed at the Allegheny County Jail;

The Council of the County of Allegheny hereby resolves as follows:

SECTION 1.

Allegheny County Council hereby establishes a working group to study the legality and practicality of possible mechanisms for recovering costs relating to the operation of the Allegheny County Jail, including, but not

limited to, the fees in place in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, reimbursement for medical expenses through the Medicaid program, and establishing a jobs program through which individuals would be able to pay for a portion of the expenses of housing them in the Allegheny County Jail. Such working group shall be comprised of the Allegheny County District Attorney, one or more member(s) of the Allegheny County Council appointed by the Council President, the Allegheny County Sheriff, the Warden of the Allegheny County Jail, the Allegheny County Public Defender, the Administrative Judge for the Criminal Division of the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas, and the Chair of the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board. Individuals comprising the working group under the terms of this resolution may name designees to attend and participate in some or all of the working group meetings in their place.

SECTION 2.

The working group shall have its first meeting within 21 days of the date of final approval of this resolution, shall meet at least twice per calendar month thereafter, and shall deliver a written report of its final findings to the Chief Executive and Council no later than six months after its first meeting. The working group shall conduct its meetings in accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act.

SECTION 3. Severability. *If any provision of this Resolution shall be determined to be unlawful, invalid, void or unenforceable, then that provision shall be considered severable from the remaining provisions of this Resolution which shall be in full force and effect.*

SECTION 4. Repealer. *Any Resolution or Ordinance or part thereof conflicting with the provisions of this Resolution is hereby repealed so far as the same affects this Resolution.*