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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH *of* PENNSYLVANIA

House Democratic Policy Committee Hearing

Safe Communities

Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024 | 11:00 a.m.

Representative Roni Green

11:00 a.m. Welcome and member introductions

11:10 a.m. Marva Linda Montgomery, Philadelphia resident
Constituent in 190th Legislative District
Q & A with Legislators

11:30 a.m. Councilmember Curtis Jones, Philadelphia City Council, District 4
Chairman of Committee on Public Safety, Commerce & Economic Development
Q & A with Legislators



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL

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February 27, 2024

RE: Support for House Bill 1130

Dear Chairman Bizzarro, Representative Green, and Members of the House Majority Policy Committee:

My name is Curtis Jones Jr. and I represent the 4th District on the Philadelphia City Council. Currently, I serve as the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety. Today, I am here to testify about the impact House Bill 1130 would have if passed by the Pennsylvania State Senate. This bill, sponsored by Representative Green, will create the Safer Communities Grant Program. The City of Philadelphia is facing a wave of both violent crime and gun violence, and the weight of this largely falls upon our families and community members. This bill would aid in the prevention of gun violence and assist in identifying those who commit these acts. The effects of this legislation would provide Philadelphia with the relief it desperately needs.

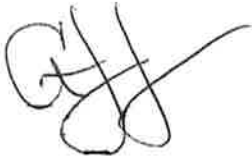
House Bill 1130 provides grant funding to communities to install lighting, security cameras, or both, around schools, playgrounds, community centers, and high-crime areas. In order to fund this program, the legislation would establish additional fees for licenses to carry a firearm as well as for firearm purchases. In Philadelphia, our citizens know too well that poorly lit areas of the city are to be avoided after the sun goes down. This has placed limits on our city in many ways, not only in the interest of public safety but economically as well. Business owners also adhere to these unspoken norms and sometimes avoid staying open past a certain hour. The improved lighting in high-crime areas will increase the safety and security of our citizens, and the security cameras will provide a deterrent for unlawful behavior and provide footage to help solve criminal acts. The issue of unsolved crime in Philadelphia is often attributed to the lack of security cameras in our most vulnerable areas. With the help of House Bill 1130, our city can improve our rate of solving gun-related crimes. This legislation would provide a multifaceted benefit for our city and improve the quality of life for our citizens.

Implementing this legislation would result in a reduction of nighttime crimes. By providing improved lighting and increasing the use of security cameras, there will be both a reduction in and the prevention of crime. In 2022, I proposed a Resolution to authorize hearings to investigate the 57 blocks in Philadelphia where more than 10 people have been shot since 2015. These blocks are often dimly lit and lack proper security systems and cameras, which

encourage gun violence to continue in these areas. Last year, I released “*The Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia*,” and both improved lighting as well as enhanced security systems were recommended by the community. This bill would answer the requests of our citizens and have lasting effects throughout the City of Philadelphia.

I thank you the Committee today for highlighting this vital piece of legislation and I urge its passage from the Senate. Philadelphia is in the midst of a gun violence epidemic. This legislation would help our city meet the moment and improve public safety for our most vulnerable residents. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Philadelphia Delegation as well as the entire General Assembly to address the gun violence plaguing Philadelphia and our country.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CJ', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Curtis Jones, Jr.
4th District Councilmember
Chair, Committee on Public Safety