

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 240707)

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings to investigate the ability and preparedness of critical City departments to possess a redundancy of records.

WHEREAS, In the current technological climate, the occurrence of unauthorized entities compromising critical databases is on the rise. Data breaches are incredibly harmful to the autonomy and safety of critical departments, infrastructure, and the City of Philadelphia at-large; and

WHEREAS, As technology has advanced, the practice of keeping a tangible paper trail of records has fallen by the wayside. The convenience of entering data and information into an electronic database is enticing and has become the new standard of operation for many city departments. However, with the risk of fraudulent entities obtaining access to confidential data, the City of Philadelphia must take measures to protect vital data in the event of a data breach; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia is not immune to cyberattacks. In 2023, the City of Philadelphia underwent a substantial cyberattack where an unauthorized user may have gained access to City email accounts that possibly contained protected health information. The hackers spent at least three months inside City email systems, giving them wide access to health information stored in email accounts; and

WHEREAS, The motives of outside entities that gain access to confidential databases are unpredictable. The City of Philadelphia cannot predict when or why these attacks will happen, as well as the result of a cyberattack or data breach. Consequently, critical departments such as The Philadelphia Water Department, The Office of Innovation and Technology, The Philadelphia Police Department, The Philadelphia Airport, The Philadelphia Court System, and many more must be prepared to respond to these cyberattacks, as well as function in the event of a malfunction or manipulation of their electronic databases; and

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WHEREAS, A failure to protect the confidential data for a critical department may result in a complete loss of records, which would derail the proper function of the department; and

WHEREAS, Although the practice of keeping a physical paper trail of data or a back-up physical drive has become outdated, it provides a safeguard against nefarious entities that have the potential and ability to compromise electronic databases. This practice, in effect, will allow for critical departments to possess their data without risk of being compromised; and

WHEREAS, The integration of technology and City departmental records requires an advanced mode of defense against potential repercussions. This may require a return to traditional practices in tandem with new technology, such as keeping a physical paper trail of data in addition to the electronic database, to aid in the protection of critical departmental data; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Authorizes the Committee on Public Safety to hold hearings to investigate the ability and preparedness of critical City departments to possess a redundancy of records.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the fifth day of September, 2024.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
INTERIM CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones, Landau, Lozada, Brooks, O'Rourke,
Driscoll, O'Neill, Squilla and Bass