



Legislation Details (With Text)

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**Type:** Will of Council    **Status:** Adopted  
**File created:** 3/19/2013    **In control:** City Council  
**On agenda:**    **Final action:** 3/19/2013  
**Enactment date:** 3/19/2013    **Enactment #:** 173  
**Effective date:**

**Title:** NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Pittsburgh strongly opposes the passage of Senate Bill 4 and House Bill 724 and decries any attempt to restrict the ability of local governments to hold mega-charities accountable for their impact on communities.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Pennsylvania, the leadership of both chambers of the Legislature, and the Pittsburgh delegation to the Pennsylvania Legislature.

**Sponsors:** Natalia Rudiak, Darlene M. Harris, All Members

**Indexes:** PROCLAMATION - MRS. HARRIS, PROCLAMATION - MS. RUDIAK

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**Attachments:** 1. 2013-1319.doc

| Date      | Ver. | Action By    | Action  | Result |
|-----------|------|--------------|---------|--------|
| 3/19/2013 | 1    | City Council | Adopted | Pass   |

**WHEREAS**, in Pittsburgh more than 30% of land is tax-exempt due to the growth of some large non-profit organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1997 the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed Act 55 in an effort to define purely public charities; and

**WHEREAS**, shielded by Act 55, mega-charities throughout the State began reducing their payments in lieu of taxes while simultaneously taking a larger and larger footprint of their host communities; and

**WHEREAS**, in Pittsburgh, the payments in lieu of taxes plummeted from nearly \$4 million in 1996 to under \$300,000 in 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, in April of last year, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has presented an opportunity for communities across the state to challenge the tax-exempt statuses of mega-charities through its recent ruling; and

**WHEREAS**, Bills are now moving through the Senate and House of Representatives which will return Pennsylvania to a relaxed standard of non-profit exemptions, allowing mega-charities to continue profiting off of their non-profit status; and

**WHEREAS**, the rash and hasty passage of these bills would undermine the ability of local governments to hold mega-charities accountable for the impacts they have on communities across Pennsylvania ; and

**WHEREAS**, the attempt to make a change to the Constitution without a single public hearing sets a dangerous precedent and demonstrates a lack of transparency and accountability among the legislators advancing this legislation; and

**WHEREAS**, the ultimate burden of the Legislature's actions will fall on the residents and business owners of our communities, who will be forced to shoulder an ever increasing burden by mega-charities in their communities; and

**WHEREAS**, this legislation is particularly harmful to Pennsylvania's core cities; cities that are already struggling with shrinking tax bases and growing costs for basic service provision; and

**WHEREAS**, the the Council of the City of Pittsburgh believes that the most appropriate way to define a purely public charity is one that advances a charitable purpose, donates a substantial portion of its services, benefits a substantial and indefinite class of persons who are in need of charity, relieves the government of some of its burden and operates entirely free from private profit motive.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of Pittsburgh strongly opposes the passage of Senate Bill 4 and House Bill 724 and decries any attempt to restrict the ability of local governments to hold mega-charities accountable for their impact on communities.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Pennsylvania, the leadership of both chambers of the Legislature, and the Pittsburgh delegation to the Pennsylvania Legislature.