



Text File

Introduced: 8/27/2019

Bill No: 2019-1987, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, Allegheny County Council Members DeWitt Walton and Paul Klein have introduced an ordinance currently under consideration by that legislative body to create the Independent Police Review Board, which would function as a means for “citizen review of allegations of misconduct undertaken by police officers within Allegheny County;” and

WHEREAS, residents, by dint of their status thereof, have the right to democratic policing through which they, as community members who deserve appropriate regard, respect, and to be able to use their voice in the ever-ongoing process of self-determination, can be involved in the mechanisms of participatory oversight; and

WHEREAS, public confidence in law enforcement is only strengthened by the presence of independent, unbiased, and diverse evaluators who reflect the broader public at large, charged with upholding the rights of citizens and responsibilities of law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement officers could work with the Independent Police Review Board, if created, to improve their departments’ operating procedures, tactics, outlook, and ties to the community, all while partnering in the always-necessary effort to develop and implement corrective measures to longstanding or new problems or tensions; and

WHEREAS, this oversight entity could be a tool and public ally both to citizens and law enforcement, both of whom hold in esteemed importance the crucial necessity of safe, just, livable, welcoming, and open communities in which everyone feels free to live, work, play, and visit; and

WHEREAS, the Independent Police Review Board would be empowered to investigate to the fullest extent possible through its enabling legislation allegations of misconduct and abuses of civil rights, convene public hearings to allow for an open and accessible audience of affected community members and relevant stakeholders, provide recommendations concerning future possible instances of misconduct or then-current observed patterns of misconduct, and adjudicate cases of wrongful or improper allegations against law enforcement officers or their respective departments; and

WHEREAS, Council Members’ Walton and Klein’s legislation takes care to ensure that the Independent Police Review Board would be reflective of the population of Allegheny County, which is rich with residents of diverse race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, familial status, age, handicap, disability, and economic status, all of which must be equal under the law and afforded dignity when interacting with any agent of that resident’s government; and

WHEREAS, Allegheny County Council will vote to approve the creation of the Independent Police Review Board through the adoption and codification of the ordinance offered by Council Members Walton and Klein on

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Tuesday, August 27, 2019; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh encourages Allegheny County Council to swiftly approve the Independent Police Review Board's authorizing legislation and take any and all appropriate next steps within its power to see its creation through to fruition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Council supports the ongoing efforts of those Members of Allegheny County Council who are committed to the cause of respectful, democratic public safety measures now and in the future.