

Plain English Statement Re Ballot Question No. ___
As Required By Section 201.1 of the Pennsylvania Election Code

Submitted to the Voters By:

Bill No. 140015 (approved May 19, 2014); Resolution No. 140035 (adopted May 8, 2014)

Ballot Question:

Shall The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter be amended to transfer responsibility for managing and operating the City's jails from the Department of Public Welfare and the Board of Trustees of Philadelphia Prisons to a new Department of Prisons and Board of Trustees?

Statement:

Currently, the City's Home Rule Charter assigns the responsibility of operating the City's prisons to two entities. The Board of Trustees of Philadelphia Prisons is responsible for the direction and control of the management of the City's prisons, which includes selection of the Superintendent of the City's prisons, who administers the City's prisons. The Department of Public Welfare (commonly referred to as the Department of Human Services, or "DHS") has general supervisory responsibility in connection with the City's prisons.

The proposed Charter change would create a new Department of Prisons, responsible for operating the City's prisons. The Department would be headed by a Prisons Commissioner, who would supervise the management and operation of the City's prisons. He or she also would be responsible for maintaining a program for facilitating the reintegration of individuals returning from incarceration. The Prisons Commissioner would be appointed by, and would report to, the City's Managing Director. The Board of Trustees of Philadelphia Prisons would be responsible for adopting standards and guidelines to be considered by the Prisons Commissioner when making policy relating to the City's prisons.