

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 2 OF THE CITY CODE TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

#0198

WHEREAS, reducing violence and promoting public safety has long been a top

Sponsor:

priority for the City government; and

**Council
Member
Darby**

WHEREAS, numerous studies show that an effective approach to reduce violence is to treat it as a public health concern and employs a multifaceted response that focuses both on violence prevention and violence intervention; and

WHEREAS, violence, as a complex social phenomenon, is driven by and associated with interconnected biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors, such as neurological imbalances, socioeconomic inequality, intergenerational trauma, and substance abuse and mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, to address those underlying causes, a violence prevention strategy would require partnership with government agencies and local organizations to provide support and resources for communities, especially those at-risk populations; and

WHEREAS, an effective public health approach to reduce crime would also require cooperation with law enforcement to prevent imminent acts of violence; and

WHEREAS, as of 2024, more than a dozen states across the U.S. have established offices of violence prevention that aim at breaking cycles of trauma, community healing, and restoring social trust; and

WHEREAS, the Wilmington City Council finds that it is in the public's best interest to establish a single, centralized office within the City government to coordinate among government agencies, community organizations, and other interested parties to implement such a multifaceted public health approach to reduce violence.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON

HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 2 (“Administration”), Article V (“Departments and Agencies Created by Ordinance”) of the City Code is hereby amended by adding a new section under Division 1 (“Generally”) that reads as follows in the underlined language:

Sec. 2-238. – Office of community safety

(a) There is hereby established within the office of the mayor an office to be known as the “office of community safety.”

(b) *Composition.* The office of community safety shall be comprised of the following personnel: (1) a director appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council; and (2) such other employees as provided for in the annual operating budget ordinance.

(c) *Functions.* The office of community safety shall design, develop and implement initiatives and programs to reduce violence from both violence prevention and violence intervention perspectives. Its powers, duties, and responsibilities include:

(1) partnering with government agencies both in and out of the city and local organizations to provide support and resources, such as mentorship opportunities and after-school programs, to at-risk populations, including at-risk youth;

(2) utilizing data to identify violence hotspots and directing resources to those areas;

(3) supporting community-based intervention programs that mediate conflicts and offer alternatives to violence;

(4) working with law enforcement agencies to prevent imminent acts of violence; and

(5) carrying out any other strategies and initiatives that help achieve its objectives.

(d) *Community safety advisory committee.* There is hereby established a “community safety advisory committee,” the sole purpose of which is to review programs and practices of the office of community safety and to provide advice and recommendations to the office of community safety and to the city council.

(1) The community safety advisory committee shall consist of a total of nine (9) members, from which four (4) members shall be appointed by the mayor, four (4) members shall be appointed by the city council, and one (1) member shall be jointly selected by the mayor and the president of the city council.

(2) Committee members may include city residents, violence prevention experts and practitioners, public health professionals, youth advocates, and individuals with experience related to violence prevention, community safety, or

reentry. A majority of the committee members must be residents of the city of Wilmington.

(3) Committee members shall serve staggered terms of three (3) years and may be reappointed.

(4) The community safety advisory committee shall meet at least quarterly. Committee members shall be compensated one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for each meeting of the committee he or she attends. Such compensation shall be reviewed and approved by the director of the office of community safety before being paid to the committee members. Committee members are not entitled to any other compensation other than those provided under this subsection (d).

(5) The community safety advisory committee shall operate solely in an advisory capacity and shall not exercise any executive or administrative authority.

(e) Annual reporting. The office of community safety shall submit an annual written report to the mayor and the city council regarding its programs, expenditures, and partnerships for the past year, outcomes and geographic impact of its programs and activities, and policy recommendations. The office of community safety shall, in consultation with the community safety advisory committee, develop measurable performance indicators and benchmarks to evaluate its own effectiveness and shall include such performance indicators in its annual report. The director of the office of community safety shall appear before the city council annually to present findings and conclusions of the report.

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall become effective upon its passage by City Council and approval by the Mayor.

First Reading.....March 5, 2026
Second Reading.....March 5, 2026
Third Reading.....

Passed by City Council,

President of City Council

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

Approved as to form this 2nd day of
March 2026

Mengting Chen
Assistant City Solicitor

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2026.

Mayor

SYNOPSIS: This Ordinance adds a new section under Chapter 2, Article V of the City Code and establishes a new office named the “office of community safety” within the mayor’s office. The office of community safety will treat violence within the city as a public health concern and focus not only on violence intervention, but on addressing the underlying causes of violence in an effort to prevent it from happening. By coordinating among different stakeholders, the office of community safety will direct support and resources to at-risk populations and carry out the long-term goal of the city government to reduce crime, restore social trust, and enhance public safety. The office of community safety will be advised by a separate committee consisting of city residents, youth advocates, public health professionals, and subject matter experts.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT: The Office of Management and Budget has reviewed and analyzed this Ordinance, which establishes a new office named the “Office of Community Safety” within the Mayor’s Office, as well as creating a nine-member Community Safety Advisory Committee. Direct costs related to committee member compensation are projected to be \$3,600 annually.

The Ordinance also creates a director position for the Office of Community Safety, but is silent on the job classification, salary, and source of funding. To fund this position, Amendment No. 2 to the Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Operating Budget proposes to increase the Mayor’s Office General Fund Personal Services appropriation by \$45,635, and to add \$31,500 in related Material Supplies & Equipment (MS&E) for the new Office. The ongoing annualized cost for the Office of Community Safety is projected to be \$183,720.