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## SEVENTY RENEWS CALL FOR END TO SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Urges streamlining Clerk's functions and formally eliminating independently elected office

PHILADELPHIA – June 17, 2010 – The non-partisan Committee of Seventy urged City Council to move swiftly to eliminate the independently-elected Sheriff. Councilman Frank DiCicco today introduced a proposed amendment to the City Charter that, if approved by the voters, would eliminate the Sheriff's office.

John Green, the current office-holder who is enrolled in the city's DROP retirement system, has announced his intention to resign before the end of his term in January 2012.

In its March 2009 report, "*NEEDLESS JOBS: Why Six Elected City Positions Should Die*," the Committee of Seventy recommended eliminating the Sheriff's office and transferring its necessary functions to the Philadelphia Police Department and the court system, with sheriff's sales shifting to the city's Finance Department as in New York City. The report, which also urged abolishing the independently elected City Commissioners, Clerk of Quarter Sessions and Register of Wills is available at [http://www.seventy.org/OurViews\\_Needless\\_Jobs.aspx](http://www.seventy.org/OurViews_Needless_Jobs.aspx).

"The Sheriff's office is not performing effectively and it is not cheap to run," said Ellen Mattleman Kaplan, Seventy's Vice President and Policy Director, noting several City Controller audits criticizing the office's internal controls and management practices. "Given the fiscal pressures on the city, it is outrageous that the city Democrats have already hand-picked Sheriff Green's successor without giving any thought to whether there is a more efficient and less costly way to perform the functions of the office."

State Representative Jewell Williams has already been tapped as the party favorite to run for Sheriff in the 2011 municipal elections. John Kromer, former Director of the city's Office of Housing and Community Development, is considering entering the race on a platform of abolishing the office and transferring its functions elsewhere in city government.

PICA, the oversight board that monitors Philadelphia's finances, reported in November 2009 that getting rid of the four obscure and patronage-laded row offices named in Seventy's "Needless Jobs" report could save the city between \$13-15 million annually.

Legislation to abolish the Clerk of Quarter Sessions has already been introduced in City Council. In a June 11, 2010 letter to Councilman Bill Greenlee, Chair of Council's Committee on Law and Government, Seventy urged an immediate public hearing on the proposed legislation. Former Clerk Vivian Miller has already resigned and the functions of her office have been transferred to the First Judicial District. However, Kaplan said that official action by Council to abolish the Clerk's office is legally required and also crucial to prevent a candidate from running for the Clerk's job in 2011 and beginning to raise campaign funds.

Unlike the Clerk of Quarter Sessions, which can be abolished by City Council action alone, eliminating the offices of the Sheriff and City Commissioners requires a Charter amendment. State action is necessary to do away with the Register of Wills office. "City officials demonstrated the ability to move swiftly to do away with the embattled Board of Revision of Taxes and now the Clerk of Quarter Sessions is on the way out. They should now show the same urgency with the Sheriff," Kaplan said.

The Committee of Seventy is a non-partisan organization fighting for clean and effective government, fair elections and informed citizens in Philadelphia and throughout the region. **More information and other reports are available at [www.seventy.org](http://www.seventy.org).**

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