

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 260127)

## RESOLUTION

Recognizing and honoring the life of trailblazing Civil Rights leader, dedicated public servant, and lifelong activist, Reverend Jesse Jackson.

WHEREAS, Jesse Louis Jackson (née Burns) was born on October 8, 1941 in Greenville, South Carolina to Helen Burns and Noah Louis Robinson in the segregated South; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Jackson attended North Carolina A&T State University in where he graduated in 1964 with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology, played quarterback, and served as student body president; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson was ordained a minister in 1968 after having attended Chicago Theological Seminary. He left Seminary with merely a few courses left to focus full time on the Civil Rights Movement, but was awarded a Master of Divinity degree by the Seminary in 2000 to honor his life's work; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Jackson began his life of activism in 1960 with a sit-in at the Greenville Public Library in his hometown, which only allowed white people. He worked closely with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. including in the Selma to Montgomery marches and in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), being charged with leading SCLC in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, He was the national director of Operation Breadbasket, the economic arm of SCLC. Operation Breadbasket began as a job placement agency for Black Americans, but under Jackson's leadership, expanded to organizing boycotts of white-owned businesses to increase their hiring of Black workers; and

WHEREAS, Jesse Jackson was present at Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, but continued his legacy working to organize SCLC's Poor People's Crusade in Washington D.C. He also organized the Black Expo in Chicago in 1971, highlighting Black businesspeople as an economic engine; and

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*RESOLUTION NO. 260127 continued*

WHEREAS, In 1971, Reverend Jackson established People United to Save Humanity (Operation PUSH) to build power for economic and social justice. Eventually, PUSH merged with the Rainbow Coalition, another organization Jackson founded, that raised awareness about multiple political issues including but not limited to social programs, voting rights, and affirmative action; and

WHEREAS, In 1972, Reverend Jackson was a critical leader at the head of the National Black Political Convention, or the Gary Convention, which convened thousands of Black political actors and elected officials across the ideological spectrum to forge a “Black Agenda.” His participation at the Gary Convention, operating at the height of the Black Power era, was to push for politics independent of the major parties, which he insisted upon even as he engaged in mainstream politics; and

WHEREAS, Jackson’s social activism led him to a long political career including two Presidential campaigns in 1984 and 1988. He was a Democratic advocate for the rest of his life, lending support to other candidates and issues such as universal healthcare, taxing the rich, defense spending cuts, increasing social services, ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment, LGBTQ+ rights, and more; and

WHEREAS, Jackson’s call for an independent politics grounded left-wing movements from the high watermark of the Civil Rights Era to the fallow period of Reaganism. All throughout Jackson seeded many progressive institutions, including supporting Daniel Cantor, labor coordinator for his 1988 campaign, as Cantor began to co-create the Working Families Party; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson’s advocacy extended internationally. Through negotiations with various international leaders, he secured the release of dozens of American citizens being held in Venezuela, Cuba, and Iraq. He was a long-time peace activist, supporting anti-apartheid efforts in South Africa and Israel/Palestine and anti-war efforts in Iraq, Northern Ireland, and Gaza; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jesse Jackson departed this earthly realm on February 17th, 2026, but will continue to inspire generations of activists to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes and honors the life of trailblazing Civil Rights leader, dedicated public servant, and lifelong activist, Reverend Jesse Jackson.

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*RESOLUTION NO. 260127 continued*

CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the nineteenth day of February, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Rourke

Sponsored by: Councilmembers O'Rourke, Phillips, Gilmore Richardson, Gauthier, Thomas, Landau, Lozada, Brooks, Harrity, Driscoll, Squilla and Ahmad