

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 250133)

RESOLUTION

Honoring and celebrating Patricia “Mama Patt” Vickers for her work to love and care for people across Philadelphia, her commitment to justice, and her resolve to reduce the suffering of incarcerated people, on the occasion of Black History Month.

WHEREAS, Patricia “Mama Patt” Vickers was born and raised in Philadelphia. She has lived across the country, from New Jersey to Delaware to Atlanta and more, but always comes back to Philly. Her son Shakaboona was arrested at age 17 and sentenced to life in prison, which brought her to the work she has done with the Human Rights Coalition and later the Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration (CADBI). When he was arrested at age 17 in 1988, Mama Patt did not know about the criminal justice system – it was unheard of for people to offer support to the mother of a child who received a life sentence, was labeled the worst of the worst and unredeemable in a tough-on-crime era; and

WHEREAS, Shakaboona was new at the prison and was trying to fit into the system of people making him a number instead of a name. It was an adjustment for Mama Patt too, wondering where she went wrong and reflecting on herself. For the first ten years, she worried a lot and blamed herself a lot; and

WHEREAS, Confined to solitary while in prison, Shakaboona met Russell Maroon Shoatz, and Mama Patt noticed a change – that he wanted to be better and do better; he was maturing. Together with Russell and Saleem Holbrook, Jerome Coffey and others, started the Human Rights Coalition to protect loved ones in prison; and

WHEREAS, The mothers of incarcerated children wanted to protect them while they were in prison for men. Mama Patt has been doing that work since 2001 trying to protect her son, and in the course of doing that work she met a lot of good people who were in prison, and felt compassion for them. They experienced a system set against them and received no mercy; and

WHEREAS, Mama Patt became close and connected to people through her son and through her work, and wanted to keep the connections going after her son came home. She sees the good in her child, and the good in the men and women who are in prison, that nobody is the worst thing

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they have ever done. She is committed to continue helping people inside get out, including innocent people who are not believed; and

WHEREAS, Mama Patt’s son spent 34 years incarcerated, and she has seen so much change since he went in. She is encouraged by the development of an ecosystem of support for people whose loved ones are incarcerated, and the work done to destigmatize the impacts of mass incarceration. She works every day to ensure people have second chances, to help people see people who are incarcerated as people, and recognize the struggle to become a better person – beliefs vindicated in the quality of life people who are released so often choose to lead; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and celebrates Patricia “Mama Patt” Vickers for her work to love and care for people across Philadelphia, her commitment to justice, and her resolve to reduce the suffering of incarcerated people, on the occasion of Black History Month.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That three Engrossed copies of this Resolution be presented to Patricia “Mama Patt” Vickers, to the Human Rights Coalition, and to the Coalition to Abolish Death By Incarceration, as an expression of the gratitude and admiration of the Council of the City of Philadelphia.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twentieth day of February, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Brooks

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Brooks, Phillips, Gauthier, Thomas, Landau, Young, O'Rourke and Bass