



# City of Philadelphia

City Council  
Chief Clerk's Office  
402 City Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

## RESOLUTION NO. 240450

---

**Introduced May 9, 2024**

---

**Councilmember O'Rourke**

---

## RESOLUTION

Honoring the University of Pennsylvania workers whose organizing has resulted in a wave of labor victories and who are now represented by AFSCME DC 47, CIR-SEIU, OPEIU, and UAW, and calling upon the University of Pennsylvania to come to the bargaining table, without delay, and negotiate contracts in good faith with the workers.

WHEREAS, Over the last five years, workers at the University of Pennsylvania have moved with courage and tenacity to exercise their legal right to organize and bargain collectively. Their efforts have added thousands of new union members to the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In August 2021, over thirty cultural workers at the Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, affiliated with AFSCME DC 47 won their union. Despite facing stalling tactics and delays from their employer, these workers persevered and won their first contract in 2023; and

WHEREAS, In May 2023, over one thousand and forty medical residents and fellows, affiliated with CIR-SEIU, won their union and are currently negotiating their first contract. This is the first union of its kind in the state of Pennsylvania and, at the time of their victory, constituted the largest union in Philadelphia in fifty years; and

WHEREAS, In September 2023, over two hundred undergraduate and graduate residential assistants, affiliated with OPEIU, won their union and are currently negotiating their first contract. This is the first residential assistant union in Philadelphia. In the wake of their victory, RAs at Swarthmore College and Drexel University, also affiliated with OPEIU, have filed for and won their unions; and

WHEREAS, On May 2nd, 2024, over three thousand graduate student workers, affiliated with UAW, won their union after twenty years of organizing, breaking records to become the largest private-sector union in Philadelphia's history; and

# City of Philadelphia

*RESOLUTION NO. 240450 continued*

WHEREAS, These workers' campaigns and victories provide irrefutable evidence of the form and content of democracy in practice. Collectively, they have made it very clear that unions belong at the University of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, While the University of Pennsylvania is the largest private employer in Philadelphia, it has also demonstrated a long-standing track record of union busting and interference. Examples include the spreading of misleading anti-union propaganda, delaying union elections, and using stalling and delay tactics to force workers into drawn-out negotiations; and

WHEREAS, This legislative body, and the City of Philadelphia, recognize the significant and positive impact of unions on working conditions and economic security, and, additionally, have a duty to protect workers' rights to self-organization, to unionize, and to bargain collectively without disinformation, interference, fear of intimidation, or the threat of retaliation. As a result, we urge the University of Pennsylvania to respect its workers' right to unionize and collectively bargain; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors the University of Pennsylvania workers whose organizing has resulted in a wave of labor victories, and who are now represented by AFSCME DC 47, CIR-SEIU, OPEIU, and UAW, and calling upon the University of Pennsylvania to come to the bargaining table, without delay, and negotiate contracts in good faith with the workers.