

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 260544)

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and celebrating Ben Fletcher, Philadelphia’s revolutionary labor leader and honoring Local 8, the 1913 Longshoremen's Strike, and the City’s Black-led tradition of multiracial solidarity in the fight for dignity and respect at work and in our communities.

WHEREAS, Local 8 was led by Ben Fletcher, a Philadelphia-born son of formerly enslaved parents, whose leadership, organizing brilliance, and commitment to racial justice made him one of the most prominent Black labor leaders in United States history; and

WHEREAS, Fletcher’s legacy has been memorialized in Philadelphia through a mural by artist Jonathan Pinkett at 301 S. Columbus Boulevard, affirming his contributions to economic and racial justice; and

WHEREAS, On May 14, 1913, more than four thousand longshoremen- workers in Philadelphia organized a powerful strike that shut down one of the busiest ports in the United States, demonstrating the collective strength of workers; and

WHEREAS, During their two-week strike, these workers joined the Industrial Workers of the World, a revolutionary labor union committed to racial justice and worker solidarity across lines of race, ethnicity, and skill; and

WHEREAS, The longshoremen became members of Local 8 of the IWW’s Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union, one of the most successful and durable examples of multiracial, multiethnic labor organizing in United States history, representing Black, Irish, Irish American, and European immigrant workers; and

WHEREAS, At a time when many mainstream unions, including those affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, excluded Black workers, immigrants, women, and so-called “unskilled” laborers, the IWW and Local 8 built a model of solidarity organizing rooted in the principle that “an injury to one is an injury to all”; and

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WHEREAS, Under Fletcher's leadership, Local 8 effectively controlled waterfront labor in Philadelphia for nearly a decade, securing improved wages, safer working conditions, and greater dignity for thousands of workers; and

WHEREAS, The legacy of the 1913 strike and Local 8 underscores the truth that building worker power requires confronting racial capitalism while also building lasting solidarity amongst all workers to fight for dignity and respect; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes and celebrates Ben Fletcher, Philadelphia's revolutionary labor leader and honors Local 8, the 1913 Longshoremen's Strike, and the City's Black-led tradition of multiracial solidarity in the fight for dignity and respect at work and in our communities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Council acknowledges the continued relevance of this legacy in the ongoing struggle to secure dignity, power, and an equitable economy for Black workers, immigrant workers, formerly incarcerated workers, those historically excluded from labor protections, and all working people.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to the Philly Black Worker Project as an expression of respect and admiration from 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 fourteenth day of May, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember O'Rourke

Sponsored by: Council President Johnson, Councilmembers O'Rourke, Ahmad, Bass, Brooks, Driscoll, Gauthier, Gilmore Richardson, Harrity, Jones, Landau, Lozada, Phillips, Squilla, Thomas and Young