

City of Philadelphia



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

(Resolution No. 260080)

RESOLUTION

Congratulating Donna Cooper on her retirement and recognizing her transformational leadership and lifelong advocacy for children in Philadelphia and across the state of Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, From a young age, Donna Cooper was an advocate. She first stepped into activism in the fourth grade, organizing a sit-in to protest a school policy prohibiting girls from wearing pants, an action that resulted in an immediate policy change and inspired a career dedicated to public service and policy reform on behalf of children and families; and

WHEREAS, From 1999 to 2002, Ms. Cooper served the City of Philadelphia as Deputy Mayor for Policy and Planning under Mayor Ed Rendell, where she ran the Greater Philadelphia Works Program, one of the largest welfare-to-work initiatives in the nation, helping thousands of families move toward economic self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, In the early 2000s, she founded and served as Executive Director of Good Schools Pennsylvania, a grassroots campaign that successfully elevated public education funding and accountability as a central issue in statewide elections; and

WHEREAS, From 2003 to 2010, Donna Cooper served as Secretary of Policy and Planning for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a cabinet-level position in which she led major initiatives including expanding health care coverage for children, advancing equitable school-funding reforms, and helping to design Pennsylvania's landmark school funding formula; and

WHEREAS, Following her state service, Ms. Cooper worked as a Senior Policy Fellow at the Center for American Progress, contributing to national policy work focused on economic opportunity and early childhood education; and

WHEREAS, In January 2013, she was appointed Executive Director of Public Citizens for Children and Youth, later renamed Children First PA, marking the role that would become the capstone of her career; and

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WHEREAS, After over thirteen years at the helm of Children First PA, Ms. Cooper grew the organization's budget sevenfold to approximately \$7 million, expanded its reach and influence, and solidified its role as one of Pennsylvania's leading child advocacy organizations; and

WHEREAS, Under her leadership, Children First PA spearheaded transformative policy victories such as lead-safety protections, expanding early childhood education subsidies, and Philadelphia's landmark beverage tax, which funds free pre-kindergarten, schools, and recreation centers; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her advocacy and public service, Ms. Cooper has served as a professor at Temple University in their Master of Public Policy program, educating and mentoring future leaders in nonprofit management; and

WHEREAS, In 2025, Donna Cooper announced her retirement from Children First PA, concluding a career marked by an unwavering commitment to placing children at the center of public decision-making; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and congratulates Donna Cooper on her retirement, recognizing her extraordinary career of leadership, advocacy, and service on behalf of children and families.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to Donna Cooper as a symbol of the City Council's appreciation.

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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 fifth day of February, 2026.

Kenyatta Johnson
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Phillips for Council President Johnson

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