

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and applauding the historic effort of the Reverend Doctor W. David Lee to join the Yale Corporation as an alumni fellow.

WHEREAS, As a child growing up in a housing project of New Haven, W. David Lee had a dream of attending Yale. Years later, Reverend Lee realized that dream when he was admitted to study for the ministry at the Yale Divinity School; and

WHEREAS, One night during his first year of Divinity School, Lee accompanied his aunt to the hospital to identify the body of Lee's cousin. He'd been shot to death in the Mudhole, a drug-dealing spot down the hill from the "Div school" in the Newhallville neighborhood. Lee returned from the hospital and chewed over the incident with two fellow African-American students. "Our people are dying and killing each other in the 'hood. How do we bring the hill to the valley?" he remembers them asking. They resolved "never to disconnect" from the community when they become ministers; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from Yale, the Reverend Dr. W. David Lee became known and admired for his courageous work as a civic, religious and civil rights leader as the Pastor of the Varick Memorial AME Zion Church, located in New Haven's Dixwell neighborhood, adjacent to the Yale campus; and

WHEREAS, To fulfill his commitment to make a difference for the citizens of New Haven and the future of his alma mater, Reverend Lee has now set his sights on a seat on the Yale Corporation which has 17 members, including Yale President Richard C. Levin and six alumni fellows who are elected by alumni for six-year terms. The corporation sets all major university policies, overseeing construction, programs, investments and fees; and

WHEREAS, Unlike most candidates who are nominated in a closed process by a select group of alumni officials, Reverend Lee successfully petitioned his way on to the ballot by garnering the support of over 4,000 alumni. Only once before in Yale's history has a candidate successfully petitioned onto the ballot. That was in 1964 and 1965, when William Horowitz became the first Jew to be elected to the Yale Corporation; and

WHEREAS, As a strong supporter of Yale's unionized employees as well as an effective bridge between the University and the surrounding community, Lee would bring an important voice of responsibility, integrity and challenge among those charged with stewardship for Yale; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lee's candidacy has generated unusual and broad support among Yale's students and employees and numerous elected officials, including U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman, Members of Congress Sherrod Brown and Rosa DeLauro, Connecticut's Secretary of State and Attorney General and numerous religious leaders; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That this Council extends our recognition and applause to this courageous civil rights leader in his historic quest for a seat at the table of one of the nation's most prominent institutions of higher education.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Reverend Dr. W. David Lee on the occasion of his visit to City Council on April 18, 2002 to attend a reception in his honor.