

Legislation Text

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Recognizing October 2022 as Blindness Equality Month in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Blindness and vision impairment affects many people all around the world. The World Health Organization estimates that there are over 285 million visually impaired people, 245 million with low vision and 39 million totally blind people; and

WHEREAS, There are many causes of vision impairment and blindness. One of the major causes of blindness is uncorrected refractive errors causing blurred vision, leaving people unable to clearly see images on the retina. By age 65, over 90 percent of people will develop cataracts and between the ages of 75 and 85 about 50 percent of people will have lost some vision due to a cataract. In the United States alone, over ten million people suffer from retinal diseases that deteriorate peripheral and night vision; and

WHEREAS, Visual impairment is a spectrum that ranges from low to severe in impact. It is primarily an age-related condition that cannot be remedied by prescription glasses or medicine, contacts or surgery. Those who are legally blind, may still have some limited vision in one of their eyes. Those who are totally blind, need the assistance of braille, audio communications, or perhaps the services of a seeing-eye dog to help them function from day to day; and

WHEREAS, Blind and visually impaired people lead normal lives. They have families, work jobs, ride transit, volunteer, and communicate just like everyone else. However, this is a community that relies on special tools and resources that help them cope with limited or no vision; and

WHEREAS, In the past, blind characters on TV and in movies usually used to fit within a certain stereotype of dark glasses, a cane, and stumbling along the sidewalk. These one dimensional portrayals of the blind helped to sow many misconceptions about those with impaired vision that are still present today; and

WHEREAS, Black people are five times more likely to develop glaucoma, a class of eye conditions that damage the nerve that connects the eye to the brain. In 5% of patients, it leads to blindness. Additionally, the disease tends to strike Black patients a decade earlier and progress faster than their white peers; and

WHEREAS, Blindness Equality Month is important as it gives the blind and visually impaired a voice and an opportunity for telling their own stories as well as increasing the visibility of the community. Hopefully through Blindness Equality Month, society as a whole can become more informed about blindness and help others overcome the stigma of their disabilities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby proclaims October 2022 as Blindness Equality Month in Philadelphia.

