

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Philadelphia Freeway by declaring June 1st, 2024, "Philadelphia Freeway Day" in the City of Philadelphia, celebrating the outstanding contributions of Philadelphia Freeway and his organization Freedom Thinkers Academy.

WHEREAS, Rap legend Philadelphia Freeway, also known as Leslie R. Pridgen Jr., is a well-known fixture in Philadelphia's music and culture scene; celebrating more than 20 years in the hip-hop music industry; and

WHEREAS, Signed to Jay-Z's Roc-A-Fella Records in 2001 at age 23, reaching the Top 5 on the Billboard 200 at 24, and performing around the country before 30, Freeway has a long-standing dedicated fan base and multi-faceted relevance in today's industry. Freeway is best known for his hits What We Do, Roc the Mic, and Flipside, all popular in 2003-2004 and regarded as classics today; and

WHEREAS, In February 2019, Freeway received a life-saving kidney transplant, and on June 1, 2019 at the Roots Picnic, City Officials declared the day as Philadelphia Freeway, honoring Freeway with the Liberty Bell honor. Freeway is national thought leader and subject matter expert in navigating health care and chronic health issues as an African American man and kidney recipient; and

WHEREAS, Following his battle with kidney health issues, Freeway established Freedom Thinkers Academy, a platform dedicated to leveraging music, health, education, and culture to break the cycle of generational poverty and tackle the achievement gap among African Americans; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Thinkers Academy provides free or low-cost community-based workforce certification programs for students and families in Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware, including phlebotomy, medical coding, billing, audio and video production; and

WHEREAS, Freedom Thinkers Academy has successfully graduated 106 individuals from its workforce certification programs to date. Additionally, all cohorts of the Freedom Thinkers Academy workforce certification program have achieved a 100% success rate, with every participant graduating and obtaining the required certifications; and

WHEREAS, Every participant in the Freedom Thinkers Academy program is carefully matched with job positions and provided with resources essential for their developmental success. Freedom Thinkers Academy is committed to sustaining this momentum and seeks to collaborate with key organizations in the city to extend its positive impact to more residents of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Freeway's unwavering dedication to Philadelphia, demonstrated through the provision of resources, workshops, and services via Freedom Thinkers Academy, is commendable and serves as a shining example of organizations fostering workforce development and enriching the lives of Philadelphians; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That the Council hereby honors and

recognizes June 1 as Philadelphia Freeway Day and celebrates Freeway and Freedom Thinkers Academy for their contributions to strengthening the City's workforce and providing career opportunities to Philadelphians.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Philadelphia Freeway, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.