

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing Ted Kirsch on the event of his retirement, and his incredible service to the teachers of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania.

WHEREAS, Born in Philadelphia in 1939, Mr. Ted Kirsch has been surrounded by union members all of his life. He was the son of two trade unionist, his father was a member of the United Auto Workers and Meat Cutters Unions, and his mother, a member of the Bookbinders Union; and

WHEREAS, Along with his parents, two of his uncles were also union officials. He would often sit at the dinner table listening to different family member's accounts of the difficulties of being in a union, and the incredible positive impact it could have on one's life and family; and

WHEREAS, After graduating from West Philadelphia High School, Ted Kirsch went on to graduate from West Chester State Teachers College with a Bachelor's Degree in Education in 1960, and then graduating from Temple University in 1970 with a Master's Degree in Education; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch's first position out college was as a Social Studies Teacher at Thomas Junior High School in 1960 before moving to Overbrook High School to teach Social Studies; and

WHEREAS, In 1965 Mr. Kirsch began his career as a union leader after being elected as the union representative from Overbrook High School, from there he would join the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers' (PFT) Executive Board; and

WHEREAS, From 1970 through 1981, Mr. Kirsch served as a Staff Representative for the PFT, becoming deeply involved with the PFT strike of 1973, and was arrested on the picket line for defending teachers; and

WHEREAS, In 1983, after another strike and arrest, Mr. Kirsch was elected Vice President of the PFT, and served as the Director of Staff from 1983 to 1990; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch was elected president of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and a Vice President of the American Federation of Teachers in 1990, cementing his role as a union leader in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch would serve as the President of the PFT for 17 years leading the PFT through four mayoral administrations and the change from the School District of Philadelphia to the School Reform Commission; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, Mr. Kirsch was elected as President of the American Federation of Teachers of Pennsylvania, and would go on to serve seven consecutive terms; and

WHEREAS, On May 17, 2019 Mr. Kirsch announced that he would not be seeking re-election as the President of the AFTPA, wanting to pass on the role to the next generation of union leaders and teachers; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kirsch will oversee his final AFT Pennsylvania Convention, which is from June 28 - 30. This convention will elect the new officers of the AFTPA, who will represent the 26,000 members of AFTPA; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his extraordinary career, Mr. Kirsch would remain active in many organized labor organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other volunteer positions - leaving an lasting impact the people and organizations he served; and

WHEREAS, Some of these organizations include: the Jewish Labor Committee of Philadelphia, Vice President of the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, Secretary-Treasurer of the Philadelphia AFL-CIO, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia, United Way of Southeast Pennsylvania, Ben Franklin Partnership, Philadelphia High School Academies, the Anti-Defamation League and many more; and

WHEREAS, Even after retirement, Mr. Kirsch hopes to remain active in organizations and projects that interest him and will continue to impact the people around him. Mr. Kirsch's dedication to his community is his many awe-inspiring attributes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor and recognize Ted Kirsch on the event of his retirement, and his tireless advocacy for teachers across the commonwealth.

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