

Legislation Text

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Honoring Philadelphia artist King Saladeen for his artistic contributions to Philadelphia and for his community advocacy through his foundation, Create Motivate Inspire.

WHEREAS, Philadelphia native, Raheem Saladeen Johnson, professionally known as King Saladeen, has cultivated a creative and innovative way to conquer adversity and serve his community; and

WHEREAS, Johnson has had a knack for the arts since the young age of 5, beginning with drawing on the walls of his Southwest Philly bedroom; and

WHEREAS, In his earlier years, Saladeen directed his focus to playing basketball in high school. His talent on the court would take him places that had landscapes, shapes and colors that were vastly different than what the kid from Philly saw in his typical day to day. This exposed him to a broad range of artistic inspiration, and allowed him the ability to foster his artistic talent even though it was no longer in the forefront; and

WHEREAS, Saladeen was involved in an automobile accident that served as a catalyst in his return to his artistic roots, and even after exploring a NCAA basketball scholarship opportunity for two years he returned to his art; and

WHEREAS, Upon returning to Philadelphia, Saladeen worked as a design artist for a nationally recognized clothing company. After the sale of the company, he worked at the Philadelphia Area Youth Center where he made an impact creating unique art pieces that reflected the lives of center residents; and

WHEREAS, In 2011 Saladeen committed to art full time by starting the Saladeen Art Group after his dear friend, John "JP" Thompson, gifted him his first professional art kit. JP, a constant source of support for his artistic endeavors throughout his life, was eventually diagnosed with cancer and passed away. To honor his friend, he named JP's favorite painting "JP the Money Bear," and made the cartoon bear his signature and put it on paintings and figurines; and

WHEREAS, Following his first solo show in Hollywood, California and Miami, Florida in 2014, Saladeen viciously broke into the art world. He has showed art in a variety of methods, from being a featured Revolt TV artist with Foot-Action during Art Basel, or showing a solo show at Eden Fine Art Soho; and

WHEREAS, He has worked with brands from the NFL, Nike, Mercedes, Lamborghini, Champion athletic wear, Topps, Beats by Dre, and many more. He also counts celebrity clients among those who collect his NFTs, figurines and paintings. With such accomplishments under his belt, Saladeen continues to meld the art world with cars, fashion and music with every opportunity that he has; and

WHEREAS, Saladeen's love of Philadelphia is seen throughout his work and still often turns to the city as his muse. He makes JP the Money Bear figures clad in Sixers and Eagles gear and the Philadelphia skyline is seen in the backdrop of paintings. Saladeen collaborated with Nike and the School District of Philadelphia to reward straight-A students with Jordan merchandise. In 2019, he created artwork for a 200-foot mural on the walls of

the Philadelphia International Airport; and

WHEREAS, Saladeen coupled his artistic ability with his love for the community that helped shape him. He strives to give back to the community by getting involved, showing love, and donating through his foundation Create Motivate Inspire; and

WHEREAS, Just in the past few years, Saladeen has given back to the community by holding neighborhood basketball tournaments, providing over 400 Thanksgiving turkeys to families in need, and donating over 14,000 backpacks filled with school supplies to kids in Philadelphia and New York. Saladeen has also helped to raise more than \$500,000 for the Philly Fights Cancer Foundation, an organization that he holds dear to his heart; and

WHEREAS, Saladeen's remarkable career and passion for his work will continue to influence generations of artists to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors Philadelphia artist King Saladeen for his artistic contributions to Philadelphia and for his community advocacy through his foundation, Create Motivate Inspire.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to King Saladeen, further evidencing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.