



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

File #: 230665, Version: 0

Honoring and congratulating the 2023-2024 Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate, Oyewumi Oyeniya, for her artistry, achievement, leadership, and daily commitment to using her poetry to stand up for her community.

WHEREAS, Oyewumi, a senior at Cristo Rey High School, was born on Staten Island to Nigerian and Liberian immigrants and moved to Philadelphia as a toddler. She began writing as early as she can remember and started exploring poetry by the first grade. Growing up in a large family, Oyewumi saw poetry as a natural escape and release. Writing became a powerful way for her to express her voice and get her feelings out; and

WHEREAS, As her love and skill for poetry grew, she studied under the City's former poet laureate, Trapeta Maysonnot. She also began writing about the issues she saw in her community: gun violence, homelessness, waning community trust, and attacks on the dignity of vulnerable groups. In particular, Oyewumi wrote and continues to write about the marginalized groups that are closest to her heart, including immigrant families, queer, transgender and nonbinary Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, During her four years at Cristo Rey High School, Oyewumi also worked as a student journalist, participated in mental health advocacy work, and won multiple prizes for her outstanding leadership. These include the College Board African American Recognition Award from College Board and the 2023 Widener University High School Leaders Award, which recognizes students in the region who have demonstrated leadership by standing up for what is right, finding a way to address a wrong, or making a significant difference in their schools or communities; and

WHEREAS, As a student journalist, Oyewumi holds a position with the Youthcast Media Group and has published two articles - one about climate storytelling and its importance in the environmentalist movement and another about 988, its impact on communities, and its future; and

WHEREAS, Oyewumi's writing on climate storytelling explores how climate change affects the daily lives of vulnerable Philadelphians. This work underscores how storytelling helps marginalized groups learn about climate change and reclaim the narrative around the climate crisis; and

WHEREAS, Oyewumi's journalism on the 988 national mental health crisis hotline highlights its importance not just in Philadelphia, but throughout the country, as a crucial first response tool for crisis situations. The 988 has been an increasingly dependable and invaluable resource for Philadelphians, and Oyewumi hopes to spread awareness of it; and

WHEREAS, Oyewumi firmly believes that poetry can help the city overcome its problems. She loves Philadelphia deeply, and she uses poetry to unite people and help regrow community connections. She plans to use her one-year position as Youth Poet Laureate to spread poetry towards a larger Philadelphia audience and broaden common perceptions of poetry; and

WHEREAS, Oyewumi feels strongly that anyone can write poetry and works to inspire others to express their voices through poetry; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, honors and congratulates the 2023-2024 Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate, Oyewumi Oyeniya, for her artistry, achievement, leadership, and daily commitment to using her poetry to stand up for her community.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Oyewumi Oyeniya, representing the sincere commendation and respect of this legislative body.