Legislation Text

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Honoring and Recognizing Meryl Levitz for Her Pioneering Leadership of VISIT PHILADELPHIA and Her Extraordinary Service to the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Meryl Levitz is the founding President and CEO of the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, known today as VISIT PHILADELPHIA. For the last twenty-one years, Meryl has led VISIT PHILADELPHIA with extraordinary energy and passion and has led the effort to transform Philadelphia's leisure tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, Meryl has been working to promote the City of Philadelphia for more than four decades. Prior to taking the position at VISIT PHILADELPHIA, she co-founded the Center City Proprietors Association. Later, she oversaw the opening the of the Pennsylvania Convention Center and the Great Plaza at Penn's Landing with the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau; and

WHEREAS, Meryl was selected to lead VISIT PHILADELPHIA in 1996 after Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge and President and CEO of The Pew Charitable Trusts Rebecca Rimel came together to launch the Organization. VISIT PHILADELPHIA's name is their mission: to drive visitation to Philadelphia. The Organization promotes the tourism hospitality industries in the City and surrounding areas while promoting Philadelphia's most historic and exciting venues; and

WHEREAS, Meryl strategically chose to run VISIT PHILADELPHIA as a start-up, giving the company the innovative approach that continues to shape its many initiatives. The Organization was an early adopter of social media and now boasts more than 1.4 million engaged followers. The Organization developed the Joint Marketing Program to allow partners at museums, attractions, hotels, restaurants and events to have more access to ad placements in markets and mediums they could not afford on their own. And its Entrepreneur-In-Residence Program - a first of its kind effort for a destination marketing organization - enhances the company's entrepreneurial spirit and outreach; and

WHEREAS, Meryl and the VISIT PHILADELPHIA marketing team coined several outstanding slogans to entice tourist to Philadelphia. Of particular note is their creation of the phrase "Philadelphia. The Place That Loves You Back!" Since its inception, this slogan has travelled the globe and become synonymous with the City of Philadelphia and the character of its residents; and

WHEREAS, VISIT PHILADELPHIA has received numerous awards under her guidance. The company has won 39 Adrian Awards from Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International and has earned praise from the U.S. Travel Association, International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, International Academy of the Visual Arts, *Travel + Leisure* and *Travel Weekly*, among others. Meryl has personally received a host of awards and accolades. In 2013, travel news site Skift named Levitz to its World's Top Travel Marketers list. Meryl is also a recipient of the Legend Award, issued by the Philadelphia Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America; and

WHEREAS, After over two decades of service, Meryl Levitz has decided to move on to new opportunities.

Meryl Levitz has dedicated years of time, attention, passion and persistence to show the City of Philadelphia in its best light. Her efforts have contributed to a better Philadelphia for all citizens to enjoy; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor and recognize Meryl Levitz for her pioneering leadership of VISIT PHILADELPHIA and her extraordinary service to the City of Philadelphia.

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

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