

## Legislation Text

---

**File #:** 180297, **Version:** 0

---

Honoring Iyanla Vanzant's life, accomplishments and contributions to the fields of spirituality and personal development.

WHEREAS, Iyanla Vanzant has had a 30 year-long distinguished career in which she continues to be honored for her writing, public speaking, life coaching, and spiritual teachings. Throughout her career, she has published 18 books, six of which are *New York Times* best sellers, and has played a leading role in two television shows, multiple speaking tours, and countless radio and television features. Her formal titles as life coach, ordained priestess, spiritual healer, and attorney are not what defines her: she is also a devoted mother, a grandmother, a prayer warrior, and student of life; and

WHEREAS, Iyanla Vanzant's life is a "living testament to the value in life's valleys". Vanzant has had to overcome much adversity on her journey to success. She was born in the Brooklyn projects, and her mother died when she was just two years old. Throughout her childhood and young adulthood, she suffered from physical and sexual abuse. Iyanla was once a single mother relying on public assistance to help with the cost of raising her family. From this troubled history, she gives God the credit for being able to overcome. Her journey through the valley has only strengthened her relationship with God, and has given her the motivation to dedicate her career to the spiritual uplifting of women of color; and

WHEREAS, Against all odds, Vanzant has received three degrees of higher education, in which she has graduated with distinguished honors. She graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in public administration from Medgar Evers College. She went onto receive her law degree from the inaugural law school class at the City University of New York. After deciding to pursue a different career path, she received her Master's degree in spiritual psychology from the University of Santa Monica. Her educational career is evidence of her tireless work ethic; and

WHEREAS, After receiving her law degree, Vanzant moved to the City of Brotherly Love to serve as a public defender with the Defender Association of Philadelphia. Iyanla shares that it was through practicing "man's law" that she "developed a new love and respect for God's law"; and

WHEREAS, Vanzant legitimized her passion for spiritual uplifting by becoming an ordained Yoruba priestess in 1983, and an Ordained Minister of New Thought Christianity in 1994. That same year, Vanzant and her daughter Gemmia founded the Inner Visions Spiritual Life Maintenance Center and Bookstore in Silver Springs, Maryland. She uses the center to carry out her divine purpose by offering classes, workshops, and products targeted towards personal and spiritual development; and

WHEREAS, Vanzant is known for her renowned writing and speaking abilities. She uses these gifts to educate women of color about how to navigate hard times, and her words have helped millions achieve spiritual awakenings. In 1988, Vanzant published her first book, a workbook for her students titled *Tapping the Power Within*. Since then she has published 17 more books, all of which demonstrate her unique ability to speak into her audience's lives; and

WHEREAS, In addition to being a successful and highly revered writer, Vanzant has hosted a number of TV shows. She was a life coach on NBC's "Starting Over" program that centered around her helping her women guests overcome dysfunction within their lives. Currently, Vanzant is executive producer and star of "Iyanla Fix My Life". The show is featured on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), and is the number one rated show for the network, and the number two rated reality program across all networks on Saturday night; and

WHEREAS, Vanzant has been recognized across the globe for her accomplishments. Vanzant is a four-time NAACP Image Award recipient; a three-time Gracie Award winner; and a three-time honorary degree recipient. Vanzant was named one of the 100 most influential Black Americans by Ebony Magazine, which stated that "her books, lectures and television appearances have made her a multimedia high priestess of healthy relationships"; and

WHEREAS, Despite Vanzant's outstanding number of achievements, awards, and recognitions, she remains humble, and gives God all the credit for her success. She has stated "it is not the television show, or the red carpets or knowing how many followers I have that keeps me going. It's remembering the truth of who I am: a girl from Brooklyn, who has made many, many mistakes and is still God's Beloved." To Vanzant, God is the reason why she has been able to touch so many lives, and embody the traits of a spiritual technician; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor Iyanla Vanzant's life, accomplishments and contributions to the fields of spirituality and personal development.

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