

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 120281, **Version:** 0

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Declaring April to be Restorative Justice Month in the City of Philadelphia, and recognizing the Mural Arts Program for its leading role in furthering the use of restorative justice practices to transform individuals and communities.

WHEREAS, The accelerating rate of imprisonment in the United States in recent decades has a devastating effect on individual lives, families, and entire communities, and creates an unsustainable burden on local and state budgets; and

WHEREAS, Those who are formerly incarcerated face significant structural barriers to employment and full citizenship, resulting in a crisis that has been compared to a new era of segregation given the disproportionate incarceration of minorities, particularly African-American and Latino men; and

WHEREAS, Restorative Justice is a concept of justice that involves the victim, the offender, and the community in the healing process. Restorative justice practices have the potential to serve as an alternative to incarceration and revenge, enabling all parties to communicate, attempt to understand what has happened to the community, and then proceed to healing and restoration; and

WHEREAS, The Mural Arts Program incorporates the concepts of restorative justice through art instruction, mural making, and community service. In its work with current inmates, ex-offenders, and adjudicated juveniles, Mural Arts seeks to give skills and voice to people who have consistently felt disconnected from society; and

WHEREAS, “Family Interrupted” is an ongoing multidisciplinary project commissioned by the Mural Arts Program that explores the impact of incarceration on children and other family members. A network of special mailboxes in neighborhoods and the visiting rooms of prisons and juvenile detention facilities will generate material for a mural, while fostering new communication within families and communities, and with policymakers; and

WHEREAS, This April, the Mural Arts Program is holding a series of events to celebrate the transformative impact of restorative justice, spark dialogue, and catalyze positive change; and

WHEREAS, These events will feature on April 12th an exhibition opening for the annual Restorative Justice Exhibit, “Art Inside/Out,” on April 14th a tour of murals painted in collaboration with individuals involved in the criminal justice system, and on April 21st an opportunity to help paint the “Family Interrupted” mural; and

WHEREAS, The Mural Arts Program, with the support of the Ford Foundation, will conclude the month with a day-long “Restorative Justice Symposium” on “Arts and Criminal Justice” on April 27th at Temple University Center City. The forum will bring together national leaders as well as local practitioners to share program findings, learn from others in the field, seek partnerships, and reduce institutional obstructions, with the goal of fostering a climate of collaboration and mutual learning; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA,** That April is declared to be

Restorative Justice Month in the City of Philadelphia, and that the Mural Arts Program is recognized for its leading role in furthering the use of restorative justice practices to transform individuals and communities.