

Legislation Text

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Declaring January 2019 as Economic Mobility Action Month in the City of Philadelphia

WHEREAS, The US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty centers the idea of “economic mobility” around three core principles: economic success, power and autonomy, and being valued in the community; and

WHEREAS, January is National Poverty Awareness Month. Yet, in Philadelphia, the poorest big city in the nation, we must do much more than raise awareness; and

WHEREAS, Over a quarter of Philadelphians live below the federal poverty line, the highest among the nation’s most populous cities. The income necessary to support a family of four living in Philadelphia is nearly twice our City’s median income; and

WHEREAS, While the median household income has increased across the nation, it has dropped four percentage points in Philadelphia. Meanwhile, life expectancy is significantly lower in Philadelphia zip codes where households face higher levels of economic insecurity; and

WHEREAS, According to Feeding America, over 20 percent of Philadelphia residents, and over 1.6 million people across Pennsylvania, experience food insecurity. Moreover, of the 130,000 low-wage retail, food service, and hospitality workers across the City, 79 percent do not have a consistent work schedule and 45 percent cannot predict their income because their work schedules change so much; and

WHEREAS, Our communities are doing the work in fighting to ensure that residents have a pathway to economic security and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, those seeking economic mobility, in partnership with social service providers and justice-oriented organizations, are leading the charge to change the narrative around poverty from a condition created through personal choice to one created through the deliberate actions of powerful decision-makers and institutions whose work perpetuates inequality; and

WHEREAS, The work of news and information organizations like Resolve Philadelphia, which aim to develop and advance journalism based on collaboration, equity, and the elevation of community voices and solutions, are working diligently to reframe damaging narratives about those experiencing economic immobility while amplifying solutions that are rooted in the community; and

WHEREAS, Institutions like the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Pew Charitable Trusts, and The Economy League understand the importance of rich, integrated, and accessible data that can be used to expand the impact of education, job and career advancement, and income growth programs; and

WHEREAS, The work of antipoverty advocacy organizations such as 215 People’s Alliance, the Alliance of Community Service Providers, Asian Americans United, Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, Center for Hunger Free Communities, First Up, Frontline Dads, Inc., Granny Peace Brigade Philadelphia, Jobs with

Justice, Juntos, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, Our Walmart, PASNAP, Pathways PA, Public Citizens for Children and Youth, Neighborhood Networks, Philadelphia Unemployment Project, Philly Student Union, POWER, Restaurant Opportunities Center, Share Food Program, VietLead, Women's Law Project, Women's Medial Fund, Women's Way, and Youth United for Change is never finished. Each day, these organizations work alongside community members to work towards a poverty-free Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The important connection between economic mobility and the presence of art in our communities is evident in the impact of organizations such as The Village of Arts and Humanities and Mural Arts Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Direct service and support organizations such as ACHIEVEability, The Center for Returning Citizens, Community Legal Services, ProjectHOME, Covenant House, Lutheran Settlement House, Maternity Care Coalition, Women's Opportunities Resource Center, and Prevention Point understand that a whole person/whole family, asset-framing approach that recognizes the strength, autonomy, and unique needs of individuals and families is an essential means of boosting both personal and community economic mobility; and

WHEREAS, Businesses such as WashCycle Laundry, Shift Capital, and Communally serve as models for other private sector entities committed to a triple-bottom-line and ensuring that Philadelphia's economic growth benefits all; and

WHEREAS, Leaders of academic institutions like the School of Social Policy and Practice at University of Pennsylvania and the Institute for Community Engagement & Civic Leadership at Community College of Philadelphia are committed to the innovation of new ways of supporting the economic security of their students and the larger Philadelphia community; and

WHEREAS, Labor unions also help form the backbone of a collaborative approach to ensuring that workers have essential protections, fair wages, and the ability to support themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, Collaboration forms the path towards an economically mobile future. Collective work and partnerships like University City District, Broke in Philly, the new North Philadelphia Workforce Initiative, and the West Philadelphia Promise Zone are paramount to our progress towards a Philadelphia that prides itself on residents' capacity to be economically mobile; and

WHEREAS, This list just touches the surface of the countless other organizations, individuals, businesses, agencies, and institutions that stand up each day to the challenge of economic insecurity in pursuit of financial mobility for all Philadelphians; and

WHEREAS, The voices of those closest to the challenge are also the voices closest to the solutions. It will take a unified, community-based approach to amplify those voices and lift up the solutions that work in our goal to eradicate poverty; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Declares January 2019 as Economic Mobility Action Month in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Cassie Haynes and Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, Co-Executive Directors of RESOLVE Philadelphia.

